The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

Southeastern Michigan's Conscious Living Magazine

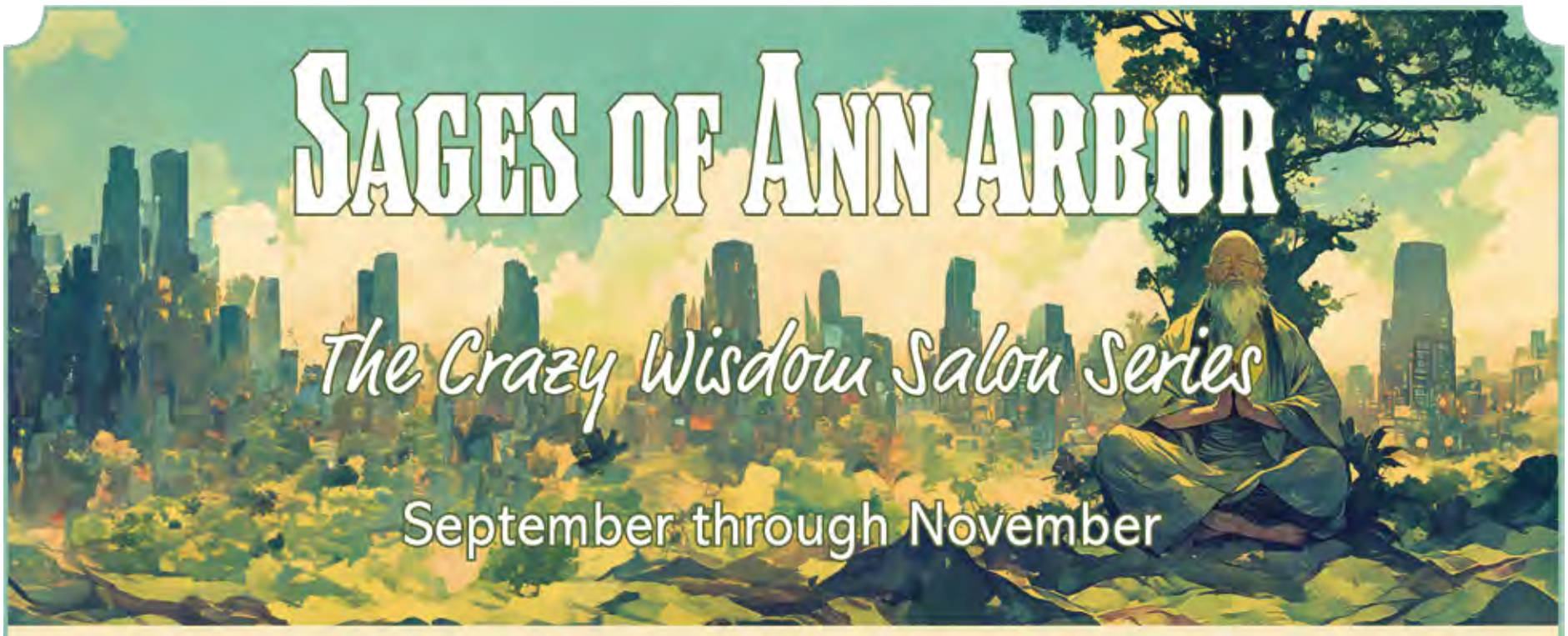
FREE September Through December 2024 - Issue 87

Eve Wilson – Midwife for the New World

Kim Bayer and Slow Farm of Ann Arbor • The Voices of our Young People

The Leonids – A Celestial Display • Storytelling is the Breath of Life

The Ecstatic Journey of Andrew Werderitsch • These Walls Can Talk: Curtis Wallace of *Be Creative Studios* • Autumn Wild Crafting • Finding the Right Birth Doula • Leaving the Comfort Zone of Middle Age • Leslie Blackburn's Big Pivot • Manual Labor • Community High's Student Photographers • Wellness One Day at a Time • Three Generations of Fathers • Cacao Ceremony • Yoga Column • Astrologically Speaking • Events Calendar • And More



Sages of Ann Arbor

The Crazy Wisdom Salon Series

September through November

Age-ing to Sage-ing:
Harvesting the Wisdom of our Years

with Lucinda Kurtz, M.A. & Oran Hesterman, PhD

Thursday, September 12, 7 to 9 p.m.

We each have a choice as we grow older: to simply age or become a sage? As Lucinda and Oran introduce the CW Salon series on Sages of Ann Arbor, they will share aspects of eldering essential for contributing our wisdom to healing relationships, our communities and the planet. Come learn how. Lucinda Kurtz is a healer, ritualist, writer and poet. Oran Hesterman is the founder of Fair Food Network and a ceramic artist.

An Evening with
Dr. Dennis Chernin, M.D., M.P.H.

With Moderator Bill Ziriusky of Crazy Wisdom

Thursday, September 26, 7 to 9 p.m.

One of the wise men of integrative medicine in this region, Dr. Chernin (and Dr. Lev Linkner) founded the Parkway Center, the original and pre-eminent clinic for practitioners of complementary, holistic, and integrative medicine in Ann Arbor. He also lectures at U-M Medical School and is the medical director of 3 county health departments. He's taught meditation and breathing techniques for over 40 years, and he's a certified yoga teacher. And he's the lead singer, harmonium player and co-founder of Ann Arbor Kirtan. Dr. Chernin is the author of books on meditation and homeopathy, and his most recent book is *A Physician's Journey: Yoga and Meditation to Holistic Medicine.*

An Evening with
Lisa Gottlieb, MSW, SSW

With Moderator Bill Ziriusky of Crazy Wisdom

Thursday, October 10, 7 to 9 p.m.

One of Ann Arbor's modern-era renaissance women, Lisa has been a leader in the community for decades. The co-founder and Operations Director for Selma Café, she's been at the forefront of Ann Arbor's organic food and farm-to-table culture, and in more recent years she's been deeply involved in Nonviolent Communication, as a certified trainer, and as the Founder and Director of Compassionate Communication of Ann Arbor. She works with individuals, couples and families through the lens of Nonviolent Communication to improve connection, reduce conflict and make it easier to understand each other. She is currently writing a book called *Musings from a Snarky Empath: Life through the Lens of Nonviolent Communication.*

Presence, Kindness and Freedom

An Evening with Barbara Brodsky and Davy Rothbart

Wednesday, October 23, 7 to 9 p.m.

Barbara Brodsky, the founding and guiding teacher of Ann Arbor's Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry, and her son, Davy Rothbart, a bestselling author and Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, explore the topics of Presence, Kindness and Freedom—topics central to both of their work, and also the name of Brodsky's foundational work. Brodsky is also the medium for the entity Aaron, and the author of many books. Rothbart is a frequent presence on NPR's *This American Life,* creator of *FOUND* Magazine, and a current Knight-Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan. The evening will include a brief reading from each of them, followed by a spirited discussion.

An Evening with
Dr. Jay Sandweiss, D.O.

With Moderator Bill Ziriusky of Crazy Wisdom

Thursday, November 21, 7 to 9 p.m.

Physician and skilled raconteur, Dr. Jay Sandweiss is one of the best-known and most respected integrative physicians in the region. Dr. Sandweiss is board certified by the American Osteopathic Association in neuro-musculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine. He is also board certified in medical acupuncture by the American Board of Medical Acupuncture. Dr. Sandweiss is extensively trained in the fields of Osteopathy, Applied Kinesiology, Functional Medicine and Chinese Medicine. He's been teaching nationally and internationally for decades.

The Crazy Wisdom Salon Series is free to attend, and takes place in our Celestial Lounge.

For more information, contact Susan Young, Events Coordinator, at: eventsandbookings@crazywisdom.net or billz@crazywisdom.net or call the store at (734) 665-2757.

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— Emily Bronte

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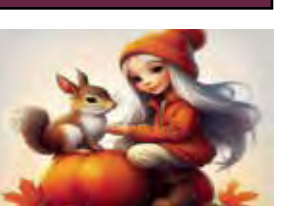
In the autumn sun
The leaves have tucked away your
seeds. But searching's half the fun."
— Laura Jaworski



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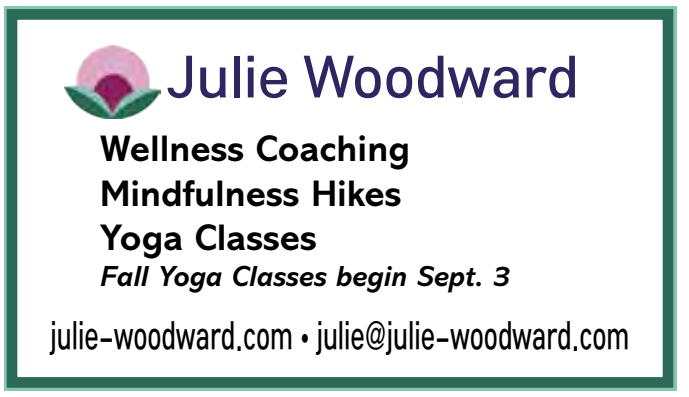

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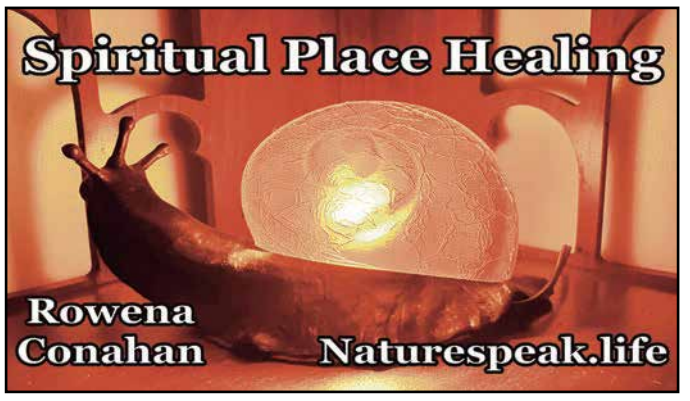

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was founded in 1982.
Since 1989, it has been owned by Crazy Wisdom, Inc., which consists of Bill Zirinsky and Ruth Schekter.

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Bill Zirinsky

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This issue is distributed starting in the last week of August.

The deadline for Free Calendar submissions for the January through April 2025 Issue #88 is Wednesday, November 13, 2024

Contact kaili@crazywisdom.net

The deadline for reservations for Paid Advertising is Monday, November 25, 2024

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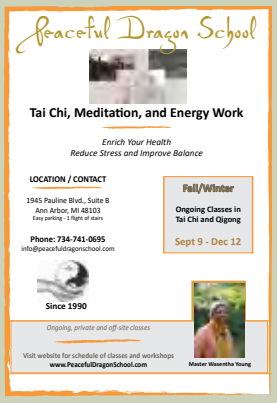
The Crazy Wisdom Journal provides an amazing platform for us to reach our community in a way that digital media and other technologies simply cannot. As a newly-opened Cannabis Microbusiness, we were very fortunate to have the platform like this to connect with health-conscious Ann Arborites who value local, natural products.

—Eric Parkhurst, Winewood Organics



Advertising, for over 20 years, in *The Crazy Wisdom Journal* has been a resource that keeps my business, Peaceful Dragon School, connected with a community of those looking for self-care and wellness methods that will augment their more traditional health support.

—Wasentha Young,
Peaceful Dragon School

Leslie Science & Nature Center is honored to continuing being a part of this critical local publication. Personally, I love reading CWJ, both the digital and print publications. There is something special about the people featured within both journals. **I feel more connected and appreciative of the individuals and business who care for and celebrate the world around us.** The consistency of intimate personal stories, alongside deeper philosophical conversations that I really enjoy! Thanks, Crazy Wisdom Journal, for continuing to seek out and feature all of the incredible people making our community special!

—Susan Westhoff, Executive Director Leslie Science and Nature Center and Ann Arbor Hands on Museum

The Crazy Wisdom Journal is such a blessing to the area's holistic community! ***It's the one place you can go to find out about places, events, products, and practitioners of alternative and metaphysical pursuits in the Ann Arbor area.*** I especially love their in-depth articles, which allow for a real experience of whoever is the focus. Even the ads are a great exploration of the community's offerings. Many people have told us they've seen our ads and articles about us in the CWJ. We are grateful to be a part of such an important publication!

—Amy Garber, Enlightened Soul Center & Shop

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Yuliya's Naturals 2

Meet Some of Our Creative Team

We sincerely appreciate all the talent that gets put to work to bring you the best *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* three times a year. Look for us to highlight some of our contributors in every issue in this space.

Marie Duquette is a writer, and pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). She is an advocate for racial justice, economic equity, and mental health. Duquette has two grown sons; a partner whom she married in 2021, a cat named Picasso, and a dog named Nala. She is working on a book of essays, and her first children's book, *The Juniper Bog*, will be published in 2025.

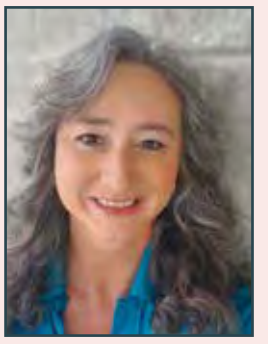
Grace Pernecky is a freelance writer, photographer, poet, and perpetual student of life. She's very interested in the intersections between health, food, and spirituality, and loves the process and power of storytelling. She's lived in Ann Arbor her whole life and finds every excuse to experience the incredible natural areas that Michigan has to offer. When she is not writing, you can find her reading, listening to music, walking through the woods, or petting her cat, Phynn.

Lynda Gronlund has been writing the *What's New in the Community* column for over a decade. She loves talking to the practitioners, business owners, authors, farmers, musicians, healers, artists, and others in the community. She learns something new every time! Lynda owns and operates BalancePoint Fitness, a small personal training studio in Ann Arbor, and co-owns PKSA Karate Ann Arbor North, where she teaches the Korean martial art Tang Soo Do. She lives in Ypsilanti and spends the spring, summer, and fall outdoors as much as possible.

Petula Brown has been writing the Weekend Getaway column and other travel-related articles for *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* since 2005. She grew up in New York City and moved to Michigan to earn a graduate degree from the University of Michigan. When not writing, traveling, or managing health care information technology projects, she serves community non-profits, most recently joining the board of Unity of Ann Arbor.

Susan Young is an artist, designer, expressive arts facilitator, and certified coach. She supports clients through 1:1 coaching, group workshops, and retreats. Her creative interests include watercolor, collage, urban sketching, and a new love for surface pattern design. Young is also the new Events and Booking Coordinator for *Upstairs at Crazy Wisdom*.

Michelle McLemore writes major feature articles, practitioner profiles, and metaphysical and personal essays for *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*, and is part of the proofreading team. Her academic background as a former Psychology and English teacher blends with her training in energy therapies, yoga, tai chi, and stress management coaching. Don't miss McLemore's cover story on Eve Wilson in this issue.



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Kindred Conversations with Hilary Nichols

Dancing with the Elements: The Ecstatic Journey of Andrew Werderitsch and Our Play Ground.

Story and Photos by Hilary Nichols

If music is playing, Andrew Werderitsch will be moving to it. As the creative force behind Elemental Ecstatic Dance in Ann Arbor, Werderitsch is in his element on a dance floor. He bounces and glides with an energy that is both grounding and transcendent. His commitment to his ecstatic dance is admirable. Werderitsch spends days hand-crafting his playlists before each Sunday, and often plays hand drums and his didgeridoo to add rhythms and vibrations to the room. It is this intimacy with the sounds that really define how Werderitsch honors this practice.

"I began dancing in Ann Arbor at the World of Wheels skating rink in 6th grade." He laughed. "It was a thing. Like studio 54 for teens. It kept me out of trouble, it changed my life. Music opened me up to so much," he shared. Then Nectarine Ballroom, now called the Necto in downtown Ann Arbor, doubled his devotion. "It was my first dance club. I was doing splits on that dance floor."

Dance clubs have their place, but Ecstatic Dance has reimagined the impact of dance and expanded it into a healing modality that allows participants to share in a more meaningful movement practice. "It is a full spectrum experience, flowing through joy, laughter, tears, catharsis, togetherness, and personal expression," Werderitsch said. "We've been dancing, moving, and playing as a species for countless generations. The settings of the grounds have changed over the years, but our need to gather together in ritual is still strong."

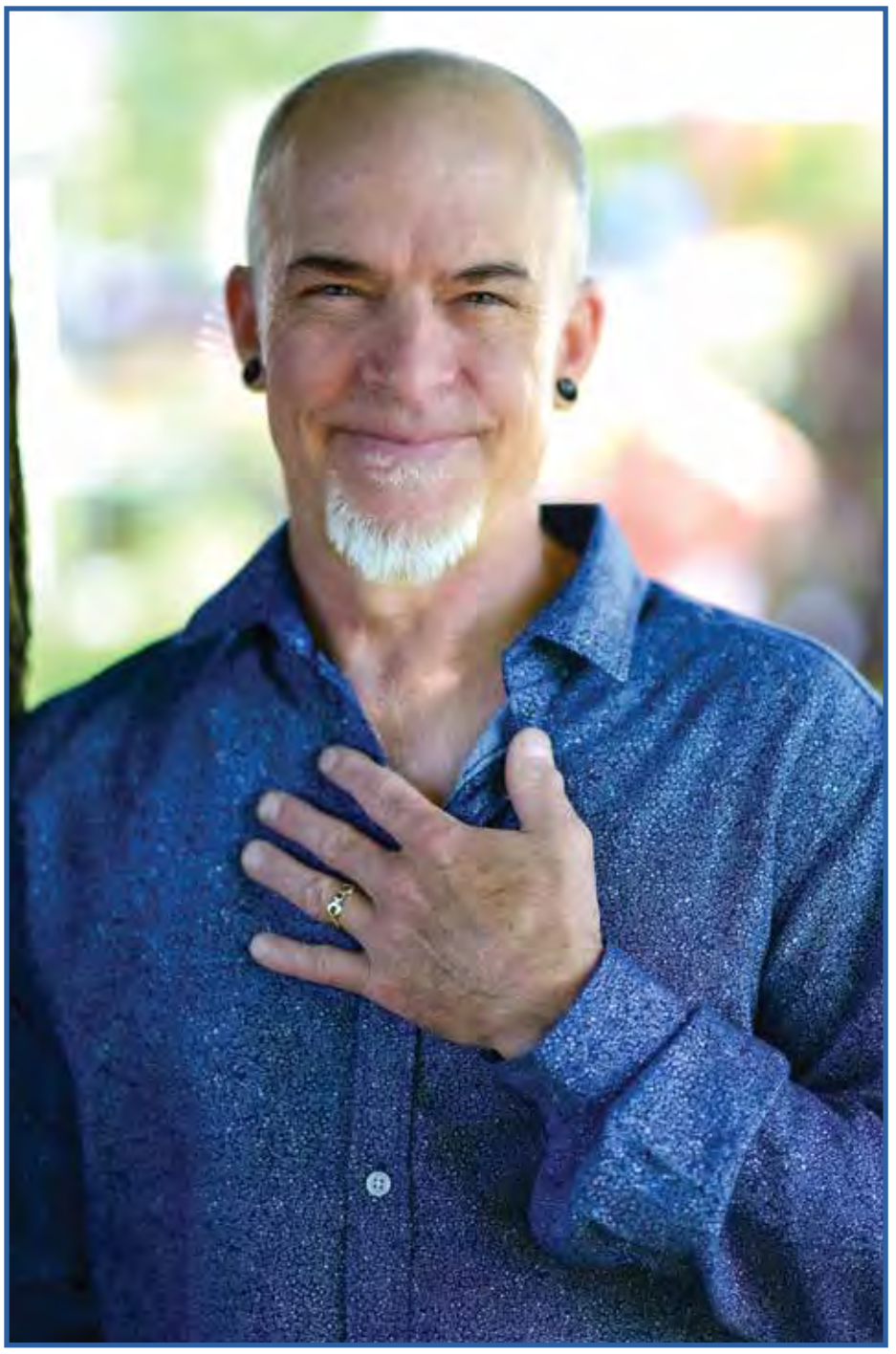
Dance clubs have their place, but Ecstatic Dance has reimagined the impact of dance and expanded it into a healing modality that allows participants to share in a more meaningful movement practice.

"Ecstatic Dance is not a new phenomenon," Andrew Werderitsch said. "Its roots can be traced back to ancient times, to the primordial rhythms of Gondwanaland circa 130,000 years ago. But for the sake of modern history, let's start in the year 2000 on the Big Island of Hawaii." Contemporary Ecstatic Dance was said to originate at a Yoga Studio and eventually spread to dance floors across California and then the world over.

As yoga and other dance classes have grown in popularity, this sort of dance practice still might be unfamiliar to many. But music and movement is in all of us. "At some point in my life," Werderitsch recounted, "when I was watching drummers and hearing the rhythm, my body just had to move with it. The kinetic link was so palpable and when the music drops into me, my body becomes the physical manifestation of the sound, all the elements of the music animate and express through me."

It was in Australia that Wederitsch first broke through his final hesitation. He lived near Byron Bay area for years and it was there he recalled that, "I was the first one, I just went out to the empty dance floor and started boogeying down. I broke the ice. Then the floor filled. From that point on, there was no qualms to dance." His devotion doubled and led him to dances of all sorts.

Werderitsch shared on his Facebook page, "I had already spent over a decade immersed in the world of Gabriel Roth's 5 Rhythms—a dance practice developed in the mid-70s that involves moving through five distinct rhythms: Flowing, Staccato, Chaos, Lyrical, and Stillness." From this modality Werderitsch found Ecstatic Dance to be a natural progression to center dance as a form of self-expression and healing in his life. "Today I find myself filled with gratitude for the vibrant dance communities that have blossomed in places like Detroit and Brighton." Though at the time there was no weekly Sunday morning dance in Ann Arbor.



We've been dancing, moving, and playing as a species for countless generations. The settings of the grounds have changed over the years, but our need to gather together in ritual is still strong.

—Andrew Wederitsch

As a dancer myself, I cherish the creativity and freedom to interpret the music as it lifts and inspires my movement. Even though I had to overcome my inhibition, I found Ecstatic Dance to be consistently uplifting. The two hours of movement opened my spine and my heart. When I moved to Ann Arbor in 2010, I discovered an early incarnation of Dance Church in a light-filled loft on Liberty Street and followed its growth, moving locations through four studios, before it disbanded around 2020. In its place other Ecstatic Dance offerings have gathered locally on Friday nights, or one Sunday afternoon each month. Listings to find these and other Ecstatic Dance events are on the 'Ecstatic Dance A2' page on Facebook. In 2022 Werderitsch moved from Nevada City, California back to Michigan and now lives in Chelsea with his two sons, Cypress and Cosmo, and wife, Anna. Drumming and dance gatherings helped them discover their footing here. From our first meetings it was clear he and I shared a passion and a need for the practice of Ecstatic Dance.

On his 'Our Play Ground' Facebook group, Werderitsch had been putting out feelers for nearly a year, hoping someone would step-up and fulfill that need. His criteria for a great gathering were well defined. He wanted a soft wood floor to dance on and the best music to move to. When no one else would, he realized he might have to be the one to step up. He reached out to dancers to build a team, and I came forward to be the encouragement and sounding board he needed to enact this vision.

On February 11, 2024, his first Elemental Ecstatic Dance event opened its doors. In April they moved to A2 Yoga Studio for a free-form movement gathering held weekly on Sunday mornings. Drawing inspiration from Gabriel Roth's 5 Rhythms, Werderitsch curates the music to guide the dancers through a wave of elemental energies: from the gentle flow of water to the grounding pulse of earth, the wild heat of fire, the breezy nature of air, and finally, the stillness of the void.

Dancers and movers bounce around each other like molecules, never touching but dividing the dance floor smoothly. Others sit, meditate, stretch, and rest on the mats. The music can be familiar, but often more ethereal and melodic tracks evoke all the emotions expressed through dance. Werderitsch mused, "I never disconnected to the dance throughout life. It shifted from disco to funk and then new wave to electronic to world music, which led me to this devotion for a truly eclectic collection of sounds that move me."

This weekly daytime event is crafted with deep intent, reflecting the community's need for such a practice and its appreciation for it. "I feel my offering of this is unique," Werderitsch said, "as a lover of so many different genres of music, and as a dancer, I know dance music. And I am open to learning more for sure. I hope to be that elderly gentleman that can still boogey down when the time calls, dancing until the end."

The premise seems so simple, an open space and a good playlist, but the shared practice continues to surprise and inspire, as dancers share the journey they have traveled through their imaginations, the elements, and a true mind, body, and spirit experience.

Dancers come to the practice for so many reasons. "As I fell out of alignment with late nights and bar crowds, a friend introduced me to Ecstatic Dance," Ashley Lisi said. "Now, the medicine of movement hits much deeper, as I find myself honored and held by a like-minded community in pure consciousness. Plus, it's a wonderful way to make new friends!"

Friendships are made and deepened through dance. At the closing circle participants sit together to introduce themselves and share a bit about their experience. This is where the most profound and the practical, the exuberant and the divine expressions of each dancer expand an individual practice into a community experience that can elevate the simple gathering into a profound place of catharsis and connection.

Brandy Boehmer shared, "Dance has been a really important part of my healing journey. Andrew takes genuine care in creating a smooth musical flow, as it allows our own journey through any range of emotions that may come up during the set. This creates a freedom for the mind and body to play together in movement and the remembrance that life is a dance!"

A new dancer Ari G. shared that, "This is an incredible community that fosters self-expression, movement, and radical authenticity. In a world where something is constantly expected of you, Andrew has created a space where you can come as you are and experience kindness, curiosity, and openness."

The premise seems so simple, an open space and a good playlist, but the shared practice continues to surprise and inspire, as dancers share the journey they have traveled through their imaginations, the elements, and a true mind, body, and spirit experience. Class ends, but the effect carries through the week in smiles and joy and friendships of this shared happiness practice.

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Kindred Conversations continued...

Since These Walls Can Talk: Curtis Wallace of Be Creative Studios

"I wished I had someone like me that would have helped me when I was a kid growing up in Flint, Michigan. I am trying to be that person I didn't have," Curtis Wallace shared on air with the host of PBS's *Under The Radar* Michigan.

His childhood was less than idyllic to say the least. "I get up for this work even when I don't want to," he said, choking up, "'Cause I know this need. That is what keeps me going. It gives me hope." Host Tom Daldin was on the verge of tears as well when he responded, "I wish I had a you when I was little, too. I didn't have a mentor. Someone like you that takes that extra step to really care about the community and really care about the children."

Tom Daldin is a fan. Daldin introduces Wallace as "A renaissance man, an artist, a teacher, a philosopher, a yoga master, and dare I say, a downright cosmic soul." They are standing next to one of Wallace's murals, created to engage with the children of Ypsilanti's Educate Youth in the creative process of designing and installing a mural.

"We talked about things we didn't see. And what we didn't see was representation," Wallace explained. A 20'x40' foot art piece at the corner of South Washington and West Michigan Avenue in Ypsilanti now celebrates their likeness. "We can stand here now to see these happy kids, these girls." The mural shines with joy and color: a blue sky, a rainbow, a butterfly, and two young black girls, in a pattern of hexagons. "Hexagons are the most resilient shapes in nature—so intricate and efficient." The message is subtle, but it isn't lost. "We built this hive of these happy girls and the kids that participated to represent just a small piece of the rainbow."

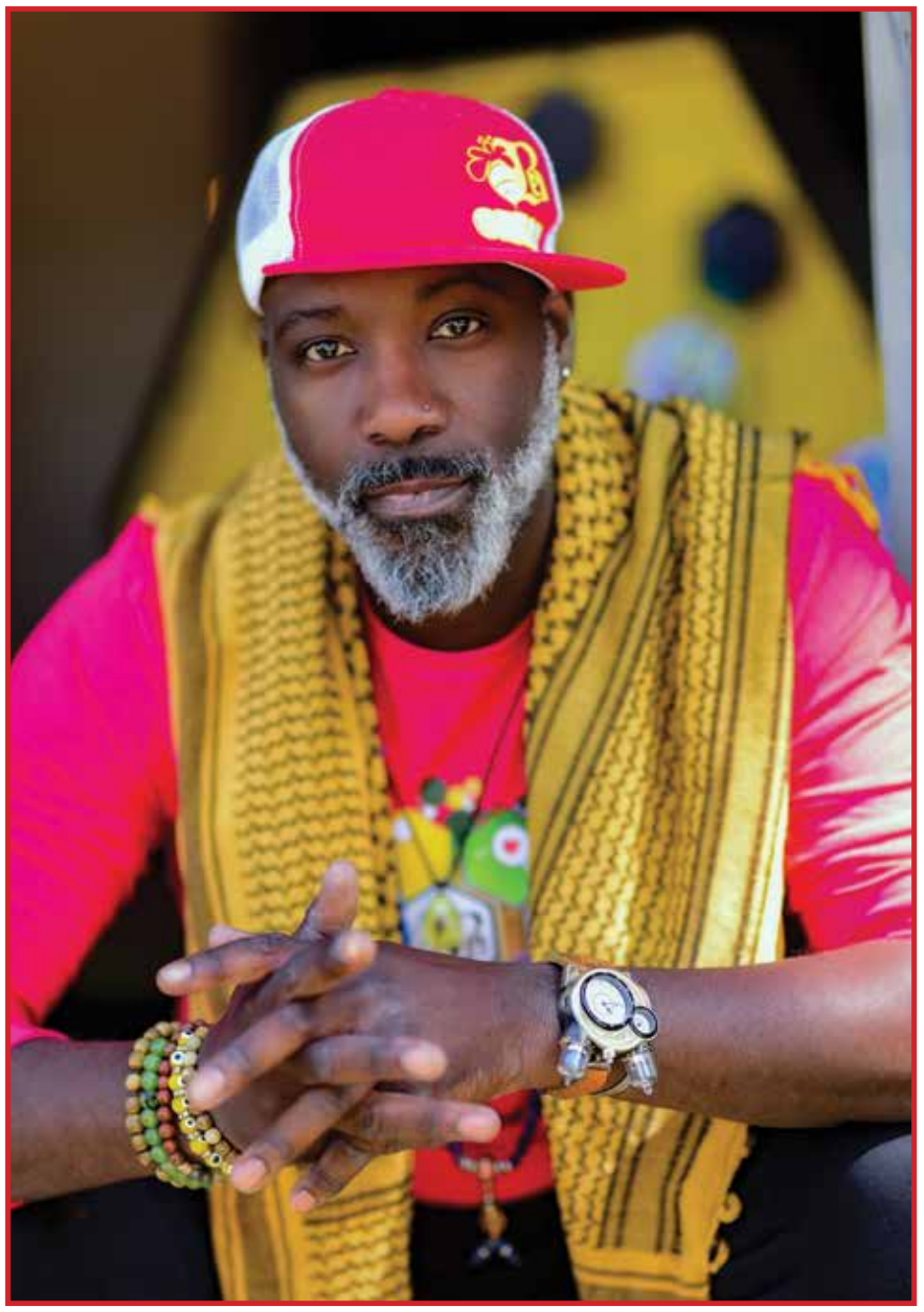
Curtis Wallace introduced his Be Creative Studio LLC in Ypsilanti, Michigan in 2019 after a lifetime of sharing his art professionally and prolifically. Be Creative Studios honors the honeybee and hexagons in their logo. Wallace explained, "Younger bees are indiscriminate, collecting the sweet stuff from all the flowers, to bring pollen to the hive." It correlates to his philosophy. "I manifested this studio to pollinate other creative minds. Not just painting, but any creative mind." Spreading inspiration is the life force that compels Wallace forward.

The leadership team of Educate Youth appreciates this. "It has been an invaluable experience for each student who has the opportunity to work with Curtis and The Be Creative Studio," shares Gail Wolkoff along with her team, Kendall Johnstone and Bonita Fultz, "His kindness, patience, expertise, and encouragement have given our students a safe environment to learn and grow as artists." And they praise, "His optimistic perspective and good energy are a breath of fresh air!"

You will recognize his big bright artworks throughout Ypsilanti and Detroit where his murals grace walls in 12 locations. His Black Rose Memorial piece at the Corner Health Center at North Huron Street, a series of murals at the downtown Ann Arbor District Library, as well as a billboard in the Embracing our Differences show are nearby. Standing at the intersection of Geddes and Huron Parkway, a series of 60 billboards are displayed for their social commentary that exemplifies what the organization stands for.

Be Creative Studios collaborates with a number of local organizations including Educate Youth, My Brother's Keeper, Community Leadership Revolution Academy, Community Violence Intervention Team, Upward Bound through EMU, Big Brothers Big Sisters, AAART Fair, uniteSTEM, Our Community Reads, Black Men Read, and projects in Denver and Canada to name his current collaborators. His level of professionalism is valued, to which he stated, "Which allows me to do this all my life. It is my job as an artist to help find people where they are and amplify their passion in life." When art is the inquiry, the answer is yes. "'Because," he affirmed, "art is everything to me."

Wallace is compelled to bring out creativity in us all, but not just for fun. He recognized that "Creativity can be lifesaving and life making." And Wallace has made it his life. He sold his first painting when he was ten years old. He has spent over 25 years working in the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor public school districts teaching art, media, and yoga. Now Wallace can have a broader impact beyond the classroom. Be Creative Studios is multidimensional, with a mobile studio, a home venue, in-person and online instruction for all ages with virtual paint classes, wine and paint experiences, formal art lessons or a free-flowing



Younger bees are indiscriminate, collecting the sweet stuff from all the flowers, to bring pollen to the hive. I manifested this studio to pollinate other creative minds. Not just painting, but any creative mind.

—Curtis Wallace

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experience custom curated for any client. As Wallace leads students from preschool all the way up to senior citizens, he is conscientious to teach not simply technique, but rather to encourage creativity.

His generosity of spirit is the first thing I noticed about Wallace when we met. He buzzes with positive energy and the flare of an artist, wearing coveralls and apron, a Honeybee trucker hat, a yellow Keffiyeh, and Mala Beads. There was work to do, so we talked between his turns with a sander and table saw. Wallace is grounded and driven with purpose. His kindness and compassion make him easy to know, but it is his conviction and devotion to his contribution that leave the strongest impression.

“One of my biggest roles as an artist is to be an activist. I use art to move and change my community. I put it out there ‘cause it is not mine to keep. I think it is a talent I was given to do this work.” He doesn’t question his calling. “It is my absolute obligation to take what I am learning about passion and show people how to do it.” He beamed,“Or at least give them that feeling of doing this thing that you love.”

Wallace does have a reputation of spreading positivity to uplift others, but there is also a call to action in his work that is not to be denied. Centering black causes is a revolutionary act that can come at a cost.

“A lot of my friends have been accusing me lately of not having fun.” This is seen as a departure for Wallace. “Truth is, for artists, especially like me, that act as a portal to express whatever the community is feeling, it is serious work.” He said, shaking his head. “There is a lot of destruction in this world right now.” Wallace wears the woes of the world on his shoulders. “Hate is in abundance. It is everywhere. Even in places where it doesn’t seem like it. Racism still exists in Ann Arbor.”

In his mural along Library Lane, Wallace applied thirteen layers of gold flake paint to the image of his son, thickly adorning the stars on his jersey, followed by 13 layers of glow-in-the-dark paint for a double image. There is an enticing texture and a potency in the rich application, meant as a talisman for a protective force around his son’s image. It was inspired by Vincent Van Gogh and Kehinde Whiley, a combination of some of his favorite influences. “Van Gogh, known for his small, orchestrated strokes of color to create movement and flow while Wiley portrays everyday people of color in the light of excellence.”

The piece is designed to be decorative and so much more. “I wanted viewers to see a child of mixed culture on this large scale. I wanted to capture him before he turned 13, the year when the world starts to see him no longer as this cute little boy with hopes and dreams and light and love.” Wallace knows how impactful public art can be to shine such a light, yet he continued. “When the world begins to see him as not a man, but black, a monster, a criminal, 3/5 human, a threat, or as an opportunity to keep systematic racism alive and well.” Clearly his artful contribution is layered with more than paint. “I wanted to give him clues and reminders of where his ancestors came from. Royalty to the light and kings of our own destiny.” Wallace doesn’t take the role of artist for granted. The artist reflects and influences our society, and a mural amplifies that opportunity countless times by bringing the work into the public sphere to share these layers of meaning with anyone passing by; still, murals can also become a target.

Not even four days after the mural wall was installed, someone defaced all the black and brown faces with spray paint on the outdoor display along Library Lane. There were no cameras at the time. Now what we see is a print from a hi-res image of the work, while the original remains on the other side. “Hate is so embedded in this culture,” he concluded.

“In a world of destruction, I feel like it is my mission to create balance,” Wallace said. “You have to be serious in those moments. I need a serious persona to make it happen,” he said. “While I use my class times to be lighthearted, to laugh, and uplift, and bring people in. I can be the energy that I want to be around because it starts with that. It starts with that energy.”

The weight and the light of this art are important for us all to encounter during these complex times. Curtis Wallace does the work to be prepared professionally, passionately, and emotionally, so that he can bear all these layers with grace. Like a ninja with a paint brush, his many skills are honed, “So that I can go in and be received as Curtis of Hope.”

Born of the Spirit:

Storytelling is the Breath of Life

By Michelle A. McLemore

Once upon a time, within the swirling molecules of space, the Creator drew forth a deep breath of every color of energy and blew it into a clear, nearly spherical bowl. S(he)/we swirled the bowl gently, lovingly watching the sparkles of energy coalesce and cascade, mixing every possible setting, every conflict, every character, and every archetype. Then S(he)/we gently rolled the bowl out away from its BEing.

The particles tumbled out slowly across the ethers, haphazardly spilling the glittering contents a bit here, a bit there, stretching across infinity and back. The brilliance drizzled down and lit here upon water, there upon land; here upon mountain, there upon valley; here upon city, there upon village; here upon the woke, and there upon the dreamer. Storytelling was born. And it was good. And it became essential.

> Storytelling was born. And it was good. And it became essential.

The sleeper woke and mused over his night visions. Puzzled or awed, he would inevitably relate what he saw, what he felt, to another and they may have divined meaning.

Later, dusk drew the corners of night around her and tucked in the corners. Low fire light danced and threw shadows, stirring the imagination, exciting whispers of mysterious occurrences in the woods, in the waters, and in the skies. How had life come to be? Explanations were proposed. Cause, action, conflict, characters, and the stories built.

When the children fussed, someone would sit with them at bedside and share of times of calm, of intrigue, of lessons learned to nurture peaceful rest and protection. Were these personal memories masked in elaborate names and metaphors? Possibly. Were they ancestral stories passed across generations proven to aid growth and peace of the spirit? Possibly. And no matter how many sparkles were woven into stories, each speaking multiplied, and further distributed, the cosmic colorful energy of the creation.

Cave walls to art galleries, murals displayed stories and expression. Moments were captured in crushed berry pigment and oils, and the stories remain though the artists have turned to dust sparkles themselves.

Centuries rolled on. Until here we are, a "civilization" that has at times lost its humanity. Lost much of its sparkle. Lost its voice for deep sharing and creating, ironically despite the plethora of social media blastings that occur every second. Looking back, I, too, fell prey to what I suspect is a common myth many of us adopt as we age: "No one wants to hear my life stories, let alone my dreams, or creations. I have nothing useful to share."

Somewhere in growing up, discerning how to safely and effectively navigate business and society, I had learned to package myself as a listener, a recorder, and reflector for others. I watched My Fair Lady too many times.

A lady doesn't give in to rambling. Silence is graceful and intriguing. "God gave us two ears to listen and only one mouth, so we should listen twice as much as we talk." Proverbs 17:28, "Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues."

The more common take you might have heard? "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and to remove all doubt." "Children should be seen and not heard." "Still waters run deep."

These were the messages filtering through society, television, and books as I was growing up. And in the midst of all these suggestions, we taught ourselves—some to the point of bare survival—to suppress the innate drive in all of us to examine existence—the cosmos within as well as without—and spin out the elements weaving the tale through breath to create understanding, mystery, or more questions. These are, and always have been, a necessary action to create balance, heal, and discover new possibilities about what it means to live and be alive.

Story telling wasn't meant to be competitive. It was to build bridges of understanding, of experiences, and of imaginative potential—to unite, not divide; to invite others into our experiences, to assist empathy and understanding while peeking into others' struggles; to see the best and the worst we can be so we can choose to lean into struggles that are worth it and to discern which rocky paths do not always have to be followed.

I believed I was content as a listener and recorder. I journaled to preserve my memory, my emotions, actions, and observations. Yet, over the years, I noticed my throat began tightening up when I felt strong emotion. I was strangling myself—keeping in and down expression of my experiences and that which moved my spirit. (Because again, my thoughts on others' situations were… irrelevant. Right?). And in swallowing silence, I disrupted the intended energy flow between sacral chakra, solar plexus, and my throat chakra.

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I spoke less—or less of anything of personal experience. I sang even less than that. I began to feel Jackie Draper paper thin, useful only as a fixed role—static character to support others as the protagonists of their own stories. Listening without challenging was, after all, the traits of a good friend, co-worker, teacher, step-mom, wife. (Are you too collecting and storing your experiences in an unlit cave barring entrance and exits?)

The body eventually rebels—it does know what is best for you. I began to question, at what point could, or should, we muster the courage to share a memory with a sibling, child, or grandchild? To vocalize a beautiful memory? To recount a struggle and insight with a neighbor or work mate who may be going through or coming upon a similar situation? Why do we withhold experience that may provide others with a light to navigate by–even if it is to see options. Different perspectives exist and that is a beautiful truth of reality. We have choice in how to perceive situations, how to respond to situations, how to proceed with our energy. Story telling for the transmission of thought, concerns, insights, and caution is the oldest most natural, inherent—and I would argue—most necessary transmission mode.

Personal reflection is good. This reflection time—and hopefully it occurs multiple times—allows review of the rich and varied story lines we've walked, conversations we've shouted, held in, imagined, cried, sang, shouted, and whispered.

Personal reflection is good. This reflection time—and hopefully it occurs multiple times—allows review of the rich and varied story lines we've walked, conversations we've shouted, held in, imagined, cried, sang, shouted, and whispered. We can review mountains we've climbed and deserts we've crawled through; times we've been rescued and times we've rescued others physically, emotionally, spiritually, or mentally and may never have even known it. There were waiting times (as Dr. Seuss immortalized) and there were flurries of burning the candle at both ends like Millay. We've observed significant moments through others. We have oceans of content in each of our lives for hundreds of stories. And yet, of our reflections, how often do we share?

In this age of AI creation, I am concerned that we will become even more removed from the natural human need to create and share our personal stories and those of our communities. Life can be stranger than fiction but also more rewarding with insights, movement of the soul, and inspiration.

The other day, I met an old high school friend for coffee. At one point she took a breath and told me that in some of her toughest moments, she remembered my face from a track relay race we ran. From her view watching me run the last several yards of the third leg, she described my contorted face, striving with every fiber. And she commented, "That face would come to my mind in the years after that, and I'd tell myself that's the depth I had to strive—to push through" whatever life challenge was bearing down without mercy.

We both teared up and I reached out to hold her hand. Then, I related that she had been my inspiration. She was the final leg in our relay team. I had lost ground for our team running on a broken leg (though we didn't know it until later). She regained what advantage I lost, and she pushed beyond other teams gaining us a medal.

In this age of AI creation, I am concerned that we will become even more removed from the natural human need to create and share our personal stories and those of our communities. Life can be stranger than fiction but also more rewarding with insights, movement of the soul, and inspiration.

My voice wobbled a bit as I related my memory. After the race, I had collapsed in a bathroom stall in pain. I heard her come in, collapse in the next stall, and wretch over and over again. In my mind, she had pushed beyond pain finding a deeper drive to not only finish but push her body and spirit to a point of achievement that I couldn't fathom reaching yet could respect and admire. I was in awe of her and mortified that my limitations had put more pressure on her run.

It was one race with two different perspectives. Two lives inspired from one moment in time. One moment shaping each characters' development for thirty years. We were each blessed and humbled hearing the others truth spoken.

That should be written in my memoirs. That is something I would like my former students, children, and grandchildren to remember—that regardless of how we feel others may be thinking about a moment of our life, the truth may actually surprise you.

With every breath we impact something or someone. With each minor decision—conscious and unconscious—we may inspire, disillusion, entice, repel, and each person will perceive the moment as they will. We will be a hero to some, a wizened mentor, a haughty bully, a stock comic, a nurturing parent, a trusted companion, or possibly even a fairy godmother. And though we should not live our lives for how others may perceive us, our stories and chapters should be reflected upon. We can revise our thoughts, our habits, our tendencies so the next chapter goes a bit differently. We can brainstorm quests we'd like to experience to enrich or deepen our existence, remembering all the while that there is no perfect story line. Every story has conflict. It is part of the Divine origin intended to challenge, sharpen, and develop the characters.

And you may hear or feel, "It isn't my story to tell. It might upset some people." To that I say, "my bologna has a first name, it's B-u-l-l-s-h–."

You are a fountain of epithets, poems, songs, fables, plays, memoirs, screenplays, and novels. You hold the key to questions next generations will have, though they do not realize it just yet as they are caught up in trying to learn what it means to be an adult and battling the old world and new world perceptions of what that means. You are in the position to encourage storytelling again with the young, within your own family, and community to release what has been held and holding loved ones down for decades. Perhaps, once again, families and friends could gather and share out loud funny times, inspiring times, questions about mysteries, lessons learned, and dreams. Don't forget the dreams.

Sharing our stories, our moments of humanity (not just the successes and not just the failures or sorrows) energetically helps us heal and creates room for more experiences. If you aren't used to sharing your personal life out loud with others, perhaps journal a pleasant moment—something as simple as sitting outside and really noticing your surroundings through all your senses. What comes to you? What do you discover? How do you feel? Each feeling has its worth. Your story may not begin with, "Once upon a time," but it could. It could simply start with, "The other day I noticed…." Then, work it into a conversation. It is sharing for the sake of sharing. Let your voice sing and share as it was meant to. Unite your sacral chakra, solar plexus ,and throat so your soul and existence can breathe full and deep and expand. Give your experience and expression the voice it has ached to use and may it land on ears that will be enriched or challenged by it. Regardless of its reception, your job is only to give it freedom—to whisper it to the ethers where its sparkling colors will be borne aloft on the breath of life once again.

Michelle McLemore is a freelance writer, energy practitioner, and stress management guide for schools, businesses, workshops, and one-on-one clients. Her background as an English, history, psychology, and writing teacher aids in personalizing client self-care and boosting balance and vitality. She hosts in-person and virtual classes a few times a year. Learn more at michellemclemore.com or facebook.com/MichelleMcLemoreHealingGuide.

THREE GENERATIONS OF FATHERS

By Sandor Slomovits

Earlier this year, we celebrated our daughter's 30th birthday with a small ritual that has long been a tradition in our family. On every birthday, and on our wedding anniversary, we make time to review some of the best moments of the previous year. Since this was a significant birthday for our daughter, we upped the ante. This time we reviewed the highlights of the past thirty years! Unachievable in a week, preposterous in an hour. Still, we tried. Over a leisurely, celebratory breakfast, the three of us recalled and reminisced about favorite family vacations and outings, special concerts—ones we played, ones we attended—plays we'd seen, books we'd read, graduations, weddings, and other milestones. And we laughed about misadventures that were not funny at the time but have, with the passage of time, become hilarious.

When we finally got up from the table, I drew my wife aside and said, "We did okay." What I meant, and she understood without me having to say more, was that we had managed to give our daughter a childhood and young adulthood filled with many happy memories.

On every birthday, and on our wedding anniversary, we make time to review some of the best moments of the previous year. Since this was a significant birthday for our daughter, we upped the ante. This time we reviewed the highlights of the past thirty years!

In painful contrast, I remembered my father. Had my parents and I reviewed my first thirty years, we'd have been hard put to fill an hour reviewing happy memories. We might have reminisced happily of our early years, but no further. By the time I was eleven or twelve, my father and I had begun clashing, at first silently, sullenly, later increasingly bitterly. And later still, distantly. By the time I was thirty, I was not sharing almost any of the significant aspects of my life with him. I knew he would not approve. When I turned thirty-three and married my wife—at the time she had not yet converted to Judaism—my father and I stopped talking. For a decade. His decision.

Don't get me wrong. My father was not a bad man, nor an abusive father. He never raised a hand to our mother or my brother and me. He worked hard to provide for our family; we never went hungry, were never short of necessities and more. My brother and I not only inherited our father's musical genes, but he gave us our earliest and arguably our most important musical training. When I turned seventeen, he patiently and skillfully taught me how to drive. No small thing, considering he'd only learned to drive five years earlier. Those hours together in the car with him were among the happiest of my teenage years. And those two competencies, music and driving, have served as the core skills of my life as a touring musician. I have always known I owed him much.

However, he was stingy with praise, preferring instead to disburse frequent judgement and criticism, and he was very distant. He absented himself from most of our family activities that did not involve the synagogue where he worked. And, most crucially, once my brother and I entered our teens, he frequently expressed his bitter disappointment with our aspirations, accomplishments, and life choices.

Like all of us, he was a man of his time. Born in 1910, raised in a strict Orthodox Jewish home, my father came of age in traditional, rural Hungary. My twin brother and I were born in post-war Budapest and grew up, from the age of eleven, in 1960s urban America. Two worlds irreconcilably disparate.

As a child, and for most of his life, my father lived ensconced in communities of like-minded people. He had relatively little contact with people outside the Jewish settings in which he lived. My brother and I, even as children in Budapest—we went to public schools—and then increasingly once we moved to the US, interacted with all manner of people, most of them not Jewish. We began chafing under the restrictions of Orthodoxy that seemed to isolate and insulate us from most of our peers, Jewish and non. My father—with good reason (more about that soon) distrusted and feared most non-Jews. My brother and I—fortunately with very little reason to feel similarly—didn't. He never managed to understand, or accept, that we didn't want to—couldn't—live in his past.

It was not an easy past. Until he moved away from his homeland at the age of 47, my father was never unaware of the undercurrent of virulent antisemitism that ran through Hungarian society. Beginning in the 1930s, that undercurrent gradually swelled into a raging flood that destroyed nearly his entire family, much of his way of life, and left him marked and damaged in ways I think he never fully understood or was able to—or allowed to—acknowledge. Instead, after WWII he simply carried on. He remarried, fathered my twin brother and me, and gradually attained a respected leadership position as both a cantor and administrator in Budapest's Jewish community.

Ten years after the war, the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 once again threatened to swamp his life. So, he moved his family to what he thought was safety, to Israel, where he discovered that being Hungarian in Israel was as disadvantageous—though of course not as dangerous—as being Jewish in Hungary. (A subject for another time.) This time it was our mother who tugged our family to a better future, painstakingly dealing with both the Israeli and American bureaucracies to move us to the US.

Once here, my father and mother again began rebuilding their lives from scratch. Our mother, who was eight years younger than our father, had also suffered and lost a great deal in the war, but she had not been as traumatized as our father. She learned English more quickly than he and found it easier to adjust. Our father could not as readily acclimate to our new country and found it very hard to witness his young sons rapidly growing up and away from the faith and the world in which he'd been raised.

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It was many years before I learned that it was not only Hungary's, and later the Nazis' lethal antisemitism that shaped and scarred my father's life. It was also his relationship with his own father. I was nearly fifty, and my father almost ninety, when we finally talked about his life before I was born and especially about his parents and his first wife and children, all of whom had perished in Auschwitz.

My father was the second of eleven children and one of only two boys. The family was impoverished. At the age of thirteen, having discovered his

exceptional singing voice, and having mastered the nusachim, the traditional melodies of the prayers, he hired out as a cantor to lead High Holiday services in a town near his own. When, after the Holy Days he proudly took his earnings home and announced to his father, Shaya, that he would now buy himself his first pair of new shoes, Shaya replied, "No you won't. Lenke (my father's older sister) is getting married. They need a bed." And took away his money.

Not long after that my father was on his own. Ambitious, he began studying to become a rabbi, paying for his schooling by tutoring fellow students. He eventually made it to rabbinical school in Budapest. Sometime later, a man from his father's town, after returning from a rare trip to the big city, reported to Shaya, "Your son has adopted a very fancy lifestyle. You must ask a uniformed doorman—wearing white gloves—to be admitted to his building!" (In pre-WWII Budapest, many apartment buildings, even relatively humble ones, had similar concierges.) Suspicious about the company his son might be keeping, Shaya travelled to Budapest, discovered that the rabbinical school my father was attending was not strictly Orthodox, and ordered him to withdraw.

Such was Shaya's reputation for not brooking disobedience from anyone—and for often backing up his threats with real violence (more about that later) that my father felt compelled to obey. He set his sights lower and became a cantor.

After my father told me that story, I suddenly understood the cause of his constant feuding with the rabbis of every congregation he served. Decades after that painful episode with his father, he was still disappointed and resentful. He resisted the rabbis' authority, as he hadn't been able to resist his father's.

My father's father, my grandfather Shaya, was born in the late 1880s. All I know of his childhood is that his father died days after Shaya was born. Almost every other story I have heard about Shaya, from my father, my aunts, and from the only two of his grandchildren who survived Auschwitz, was colored by violence or the threat of violence. Everyone agreed that he was physically an unusually strong man. He was an advance scout in the Hungarian Army during WWI, climbing trees and lookout towers, occasionally behind enemy lines, reporting on troop movements. Recognized as a powerful swimmer, he also served in another way— ferrying wounded soldiers across rivers on his back. Hard to imagine his experiences didn't mark him with some form of PTSD.

My father was mistaken. He didn't fail. He didn't lose his first children. They were brutally, heartbreakingly taken from him, something that no faith, no justice can ever hope to adequately explain or redeem. Nothing—not his faith, not his father's violence—could have saved them.

After the war, he routinely hiked into the Carpathian Mountains, felled trees, dragged them to the Tisza River, tied them into rafts, and floated back to his village. He cut the logs into firewood to heat the communal bathhouse and was known to guard his woodpile at night with an ax. After he was fired for threatening people at the bathhouse, he became a peddler, choosing to pull his cart with wild horses that no one else dared handle.

He tried teaching my father to swim by simply tossing him into the Tisza. My father nearly drowned. Shaya was not pleased. My father never learned to swim.

Shaya once so severely beat one of his daughters with a belt for buying unkosher wine, that his wife, Rozsa had to stop him, screaming, "You animal, you're going to kill her!" Another time he kidnapped one of his adult daughters in Budapest, and attempted to bring her home, because he suspected her of being with a non-Jewish man.

After Rozsa delivered their eleventh child, her doctor, concerned about her ability to withstand another pregnancy, said, "Mrs. Slomovits, it's time to lock the door." Rozsa replied, "Doctor, my husband's key will unlock that door."

One of Shaya's surviving grandchildren told me that story. The expression on her face implied the obvious.

But she, and other surviving members of his family, including my father, also recalled with pride the times when Shaya's violent nature protected his family.

While on furlough during WWI, Shaya came home and discovered that his young son, my father, had not been allowed to attend the cheder, the Jewish school, because his wife, Rozsa, hadn't had money to pay the *malamud*, the teacher. My grandfather, after learning that the malamud lived and taught in the synagogue's attic and was hiding there to avoid serving in the Army. Shaya got dressed in his full uniform, attached a bayonet to his weapon, marched up the stairs to the shul's attic, introduced himself, and had a brief, presumably one-sided conversation with the malamud. My father was welcome to attend cheder for the remainder of the war.

When WWI ended, small bands of troops from the retreating Czechoslovakian Army began looting homes and terrorizing civilians in Balassagyarmat, the town where his family lived. Shaya stood by his front gate, rifle at the ready. "They are not coming in here," he said. And they didn't.

When my father was about twelve years old, one Saturday morning he was walking home from shul with a few of his friends. Shaya and some other men were walking a bit behind them. A group of teenagers surrounded the boys, chanting, "dirty Jews, dirty Jews." When one of them yanked my father's payis, the customary long sideburns of religious Jews and landed a blow to my father's head, Shaya came running and the young men fled. He caught two of them from behind and knocked them flat with a fist in each back.

During my tumultuous teenage years, when I resented and resisted nearly everything my father asked of or hoped for me, he at times bitterly lamented that my brother and I would someday lay flowers on our mother's grave but—and I'll put it far less coarsely than he did—we would disrespect his grave. He pointed us to the Ten Commandments, specifically to number Five. "It does not say, 'Love your father and mother.' You can't command anyone to love. It says 'Honor,' in other words, 'Respect.'"

But of course, he must have longed for our love, as we ached for his. It saddens me now to know that we were unable to give that to each other. That none of us knew enough about his past, nor about our future, to be able to accept either. I think my father, even to his dying day, may have felt that he'd failed as a father—twice. First, when he was unable to protect the children he fathered before the war. (As Barbara Kingsolver wrote in *The Poisonwood Bible*, "For if there is any single thing that everyone hopes for most dearly it must be this: that the youngest outlive the oldest.") And second, when he couldn't get my brother and me to abide by the strict tenets of his faith. He once told our mother, "I've lost them, just like I lost my first children."

Wherever we've gone, we've carried his name, his voice, and his music; they have been the foundation of much of the joy in our lives.

My father was mistaken. He didn't fail. He didn't lose his first children. They were brutally, heartbreakingly taken from him, something that no faith, no justice can ever hope to adequately explain or redeem. Nothing—not his faith, not his father's violence—could have saved them.

And he didn't lose my brother and me. Wherever we've gone, we've carried his name, his voice, and his music; they have been the foundation of much of the joy in our lives.

I'll quote Barbara Kingsolver, again from *The Poisonwood Bible*, a book about a deeply wounded man—one who responded to his trauma in a far more misguided and abusive manner than my father ever did—whose children ultimately reject his path and yet go on to live lives that embody the essence of his faith: "Every life is different because you passed this way and touched history."

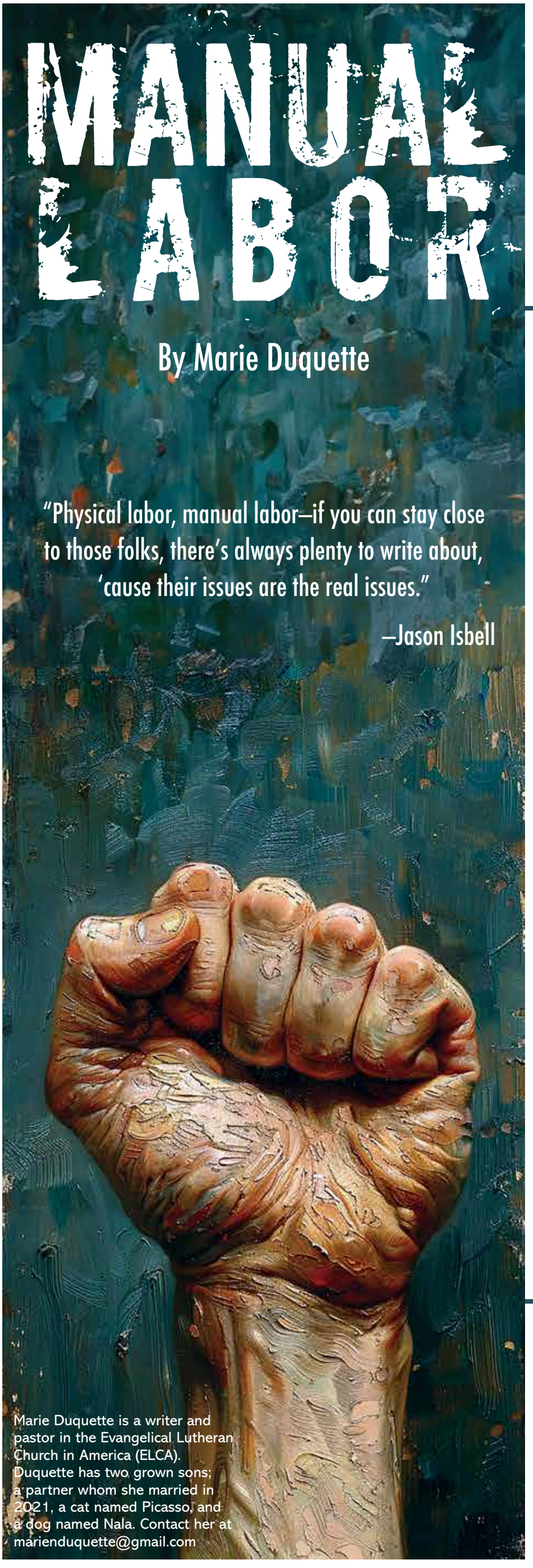
I reflect on us three fathers:my grandfather, my father, and me. Perhaps because of his memories of his own childhood, my father rejected Shaya's violence, yet still managed to protect and nurture us. Similarly, learning from my father's example, I have tried to not distance myself from my daughter, and have not insisted that she shape her future around my past.

When I said, "We did okay," to my wife on our daughter's birthday, I did not mean that I have been an ideal father. I have my regrets, doubts, and memories of things I wish I had done differently. I have tried to understand and forgive myself, as I have tried to understand and forgive my father. If I could, I would now say to him, "You did okay."

Sandor Slomovits is one of the twin brothers who comprise Gemini, the nationally acclaimed children's music duo. Since 1973, Sandor, with his brother Laszlo, has toured the US and Canada and they have released over a dozen award-winning recordings and a concert video. Sandor also plays music with his daughter, Emily, and is a freelance writer for a number of local and national papers and magazines.

MANUAL LABOR

By Marie Duquette


"Physical labor, manual labor–if you can stay close to those folks, there's always plenty to write about, 'cause their issues are the real issues."
–Jason Isbell

Marie Duquette is a writer and pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Duquette has two grown sons; a partner whom she married in 2021, a cat named Picasso, and a dog named Nala. Contact her at marienduquette@gmail.com

I still have the scar on my forearm from when I touched it to the edge of the oversized sheet pan after taking it out of the oven. It happened the first week I worked in a busy kitchen, one year ago. I wear it well.

At age sixty-three, after a lifetime of jobs that demanded my brains, wit, voice, compassion, and leadership, I jumped into the most physically demanding job of my life. I did not anticipate that this season of semi-retirement would include working with a dozen chefs in a busy kitchen. I did not imagine pouring off boiling water from heavy pots of pasta or using just one hand to transfer sheet pans of chicken breasts from the oven to the quick-cooler while my other hand was holding the door of the cooler open.

At age sixty-three, after a lifetime of jobs that demanded my brains, wit, voice, compassion, and leadership, I jumped into the most physically demanding job of my life.

I imagined this season would continue my lifetime occupation of sitting at a desk, leaning heavily into my mind, my imagination, and my keyboard. I didn't realize that this plan would come up short in compensation, in health insurance, in engagement with the world, or in the ways my body needed to move to be healthy.

For the last year, I have been working in a busy industrial kitchen where we make catering-sized trays of pulled barbecue, cashew chicken, and eggplant parmesan, among other things. We make four homemade soups daily, simmering the stocks all night long. We make our own salad dressings, pesto, and mayonnaise. We use an immersion blender the size of an upright vacuum cleaner. I walk an average of four miles per a six-and-a-half-hour shift, including up and down steel stairs that separate the front of the house from the back.

At Thanksgiving, we roasted 400 turkeys. We prepared, boxed, and delivered more than 200 feasts with a wide variety of side dishes.

We carried walkie-talkies on the two days those customers picked up their dinners, so that the front of the house could easily tell the back of the house which customer had arrived, and a runner could select their side dishes from refrigerated racks, box their full order, and rush it to them.

Everything in this kitchen is big. The steel pots in which I boil water for orzo, penne, and couscous hold forty quarts of water. The sheet pans are 13" x 18" and tall racks on wheels hold twenty pans each. The separated stainless sinks are bigger than the biggest bathtub I've ever seen.

Musical artist, Jason Isbell wrote, "Physical labor, manual labor – if you can stay close to those folks, there's always plenty to write about, 'cause their issues are the real issues."

I was a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for twenty years, serving four congregations, in three separate states. In retrospect, the conversations I had in that profession seem too measured, too careful, more scripted than any I've had during my year with the chefs. In our kitchen, we listen to loud, raucous, often vulgar music. I use a chef knife to chop everything, no matter how small the dice. And as the day goes on, and chefs toss their black sauce-spotted aprons into the laundry can, I often find myself in conversations about real issues with the few who are left. We talk about work shoes and tattoos. We talk about health issues, the inadequacies of insurance, and the challenge of caring for extended family. We talk about grief and the way it shapeshifts but never completely goes away.

Six months into this job, I had to take several weeks off because of a cyst in the back of my left leg. I felt ashamed, as if this new condition was my fault for not being as fit as I was in the first half of my life. My leg felt like a saturated upright post on an old fishing dock—both painful and heavy to move. When I came in to tell my coworkers I needed some time off, they treated me like a family member they had known for a lifetime instead of a worker they had just recently met. And when I came back, they acted as if they had been waiting up all night for me to return.

When I was a pastor, I talked a lot about building relationships, living in community, and feeding people. Now that I am an aging woman in a busy kitchen, I am the one being fed.

My coworkers are immigrants, transgender, and gay. They are young couples with feisty children and seniors trying to make ends meet. They take short breaks to smoke, sitting on a milk crate against an outside wall of the kitchen. Many of them are bilingual. All of them are funny.

It is the most diverse community I have ever known.

Chef Dominique Crenn said, "Being a chef is about feeding people, which is part of the story of all humanity. And in all five versions of the story of the loaves and the fishes in the New Testament, Jesus responds to his disciple's question about how to feed the throngs of people by saying, "You feed them."

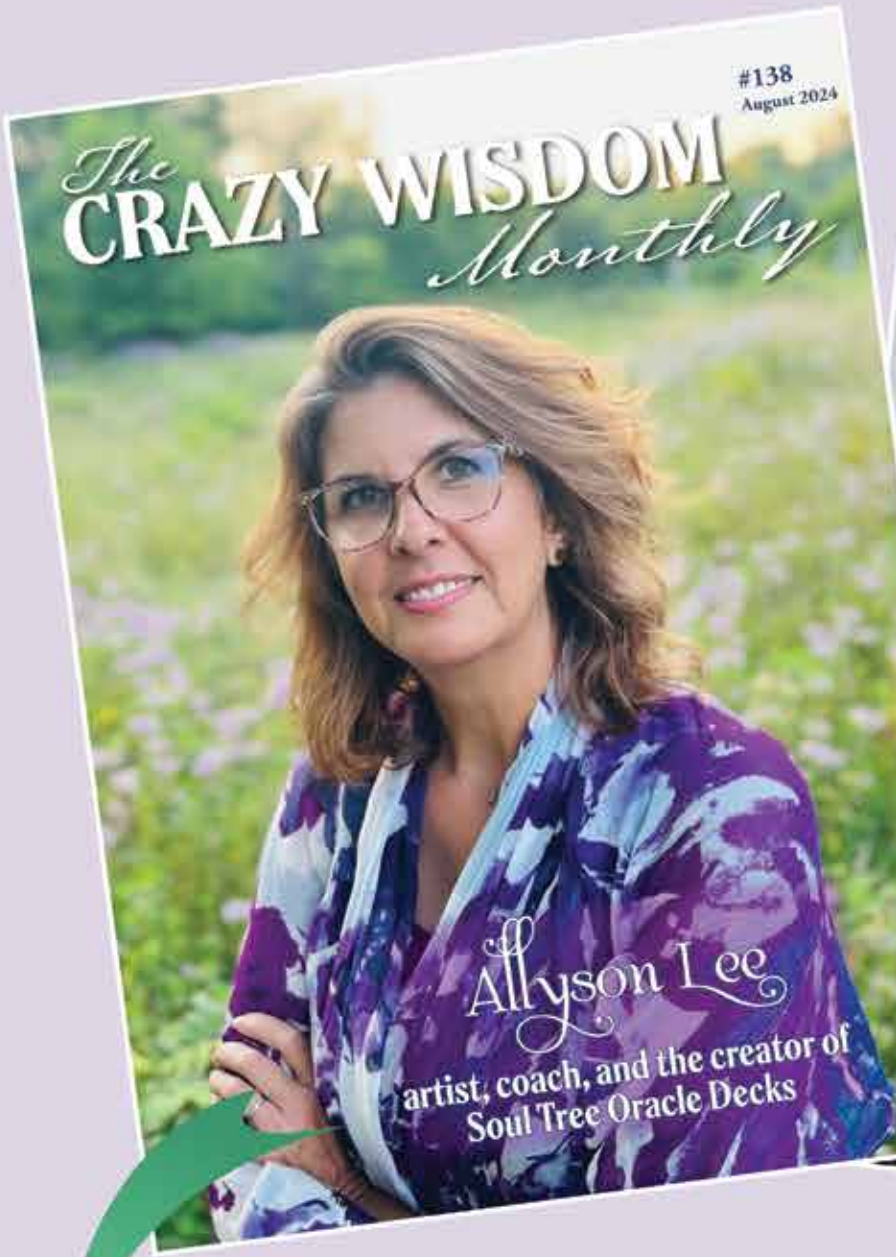
When I was a pastor, I talked a lot about building relationships, living in community, and feeding people. Now that I am an aging woman in a busy kitchen, I am the one being fed.

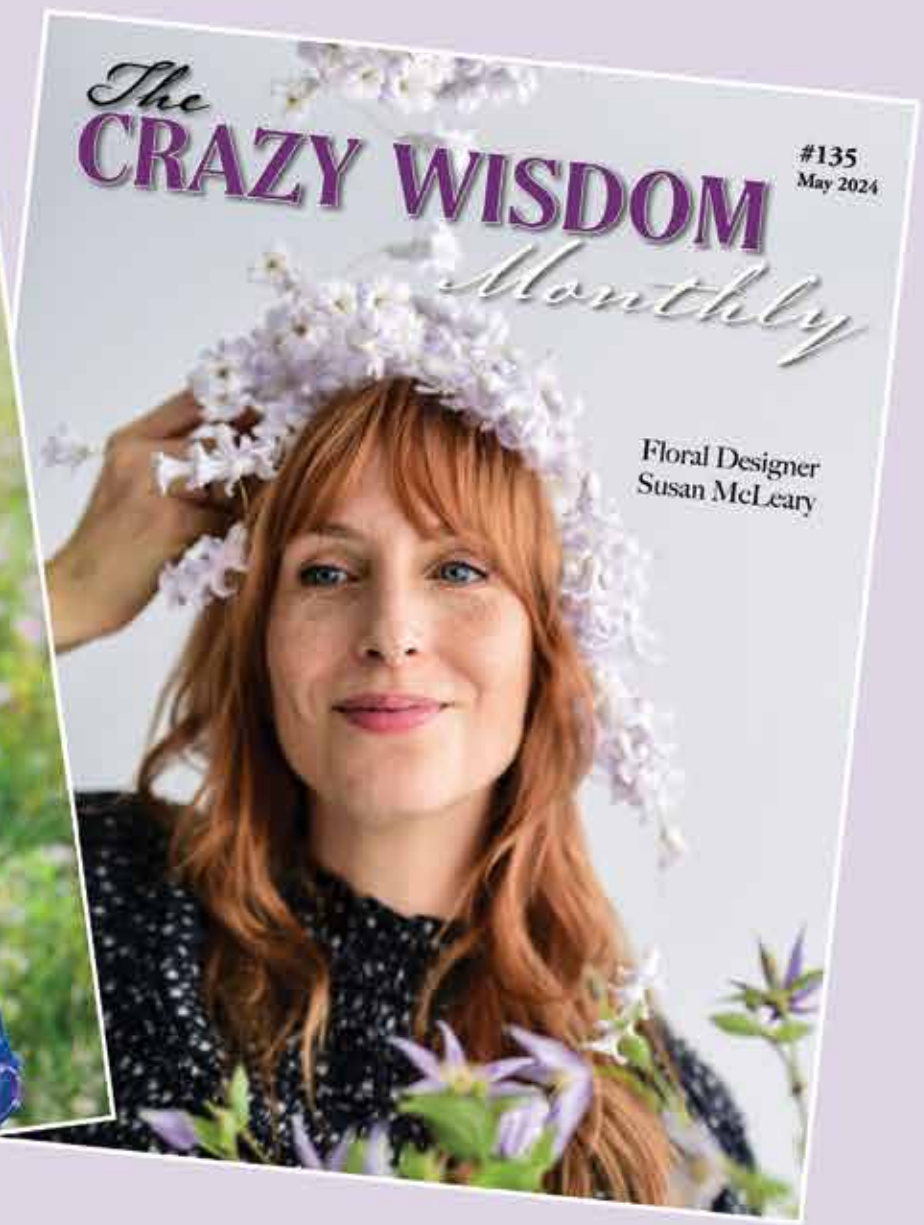
STAY CONNECTED

Read the

Crazy Wisdom Monthly

The Crazy Wisdom Biweekly morphed into *The Crazy Wisdom Monthly* in March and seeks to represent the voices of our community in a timely and entertaining manner. With **NEW** articles and personal essays, **NEW** event listings, and **NEW** author, artist, and musician interviews, it's the best of Crazy Wisdom in a **bite-sized** read!





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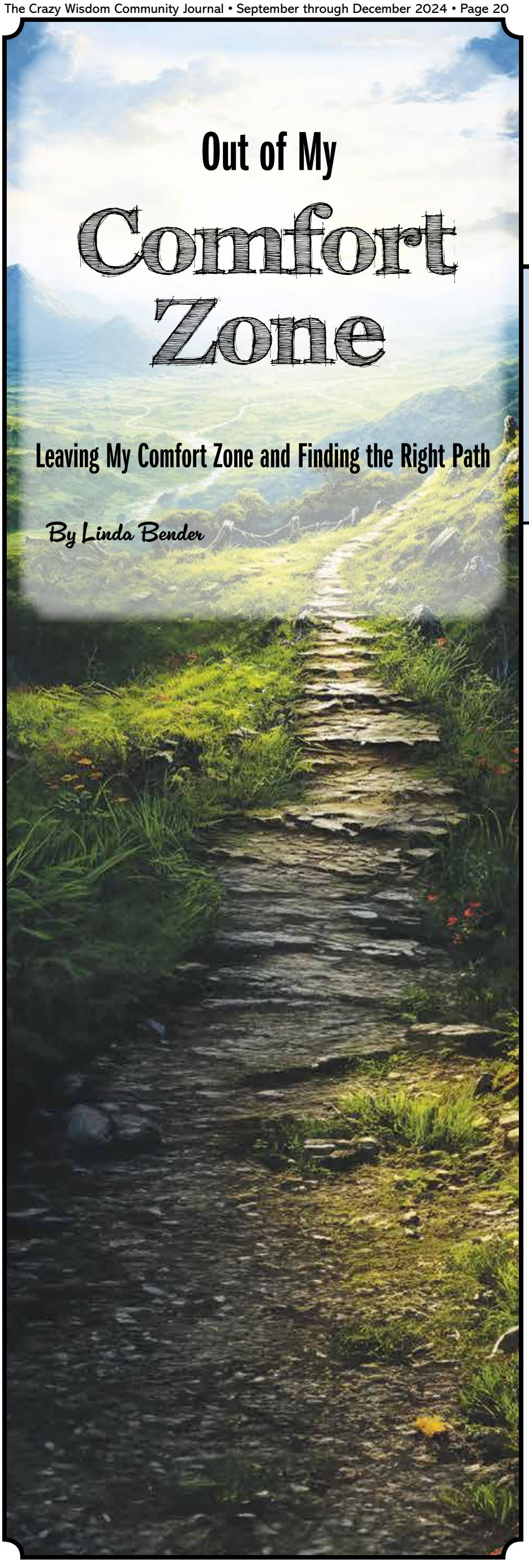

The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal asked a number of leaders in southeastern Michigan's conscious living community to reflect upon times in their lives that they've left their comfort zones to venture out in new ways. In the distant past or much more recently, we asked, what did you do, what inspired you, did it change you, inside or outside, big or little? Did you attend a new class, take an adventurous trip, go skydiving, stretch beyond a long entrenched boundary, start a new relationship, or end an old one, take a leap, retire, join the Peace Corps, go on a night trek in the wilderness, or just do something way out of the ordinary?

Linda Bender grew up in East Lansing and went to college at Michigan State University. She majored in the James Madison Residential college and loved it. While in school, she met her husband, Karlan, and they have been married for 37 years. They live in Scio Township and have two sons. Their oldest, Jacob, is married to Melissa, who is a teacher at Pioneer High School, and they have a son named Danny, who is kindergarten bound. The Bender's youngest son is a Rabbi in White Plains, NY.

Bender received her master's in social work in 1987 from Washington University in St. Louis. She has a private practice specializing in older people dealing with issues resulting from abuse and trauma, works with people with complicated grief, and people dealing with difficult health issues. Her office is located at 4488 Jackson Road, Suite 4 in Ann Arbor. Learn more by calling (734)395-2285.

Leaving my comfort zone. These words alone take me to an uncomfortable place. I generally like to be in one place, get comfy, and stay there! Think long marriage, long career, grown kids, long time in one home, long time in one office, the list keeps going.

My biggest leap out of comfort was leaving Arbor Hospice after 17 years to pursue a private practice full time. I loved working at Arbor Hospice because it was meaningful work with wonderful colleagues. At the same time, there were parts of me that were saying it was time to be brave and try a new path.

I have discovered, as I go through life, that some of the best parts of my journey have been totally unexpected.

I was at a point in my life where I felt like I had no focus. I had tried so many jobs that I enjoyed, but they were never places I wanted to stay.

When I graduated from Michigan State University, I had a variety of jobs including working for the AFL-CIO, as bookkeeper for an advertising agency, and as an office manager for a tool and die manufacturer. I was at a point in my life where I felt like I had no focus. I had tried so many jobs that I enjoyed, but they were never places I wanted to stay. I felt like I needed to find my reason for being on this earth, and the idea that I could use my skill set to help others sounded perfect. It was then, that I decided to be a social worker. After making that decision, so many things fell into place. I was able to focus on being a full-time student and prepare for a career of truly helping people. In one of my first classes, my professor said that a social worker's job is to manipulate the environment to benefit their clients. I loved that idea and have held onto it for almost 40 years.

I thought I wanted to work with kids, but one of my siblings became very ill, and my family was struggling to deal with her diagnosis. I thought I would take a medical social work class so that I could help. Suddenly, I had a new path, and I became a medical social worker.

In one of my first classes my professor said that a social workers' job is to manipulate the environment to benefit their clients. I loved that idea and have held onto it for almost 40 years.

I worked in several area hospitals and enjoyed it. When Arbor Hospice built their residential facility near my home, I was very drawn to the concept.

I applied, was hired, and suddenly had a new direction. I barely understood what hospice was, but it seemed like the right place to be. I loved the ability to meet with people in their homes and help them process the hardest time of their lives. I truly believe that I was given a gift to help people in difficult situations, and it was my job to make the best of that gift. When people asked me how I could do this work, I told them I was smart enough to use the gifts I was given.

But as much as I loved working at Arbor Hospice, private practice called to me. More specifically, working with abused and traumatized people called to me. I realized I needed more training to do that kind of work. So, I sought training in EMDR and Internal Family Systems. Both protocols were fascinating, and I learned a lot about myself as I learned how to help others.

Both protocols were fascinating, and I learned a lot about myself as I learned how to help others.

One of my coworkers at Arbor Hospice asked me once if I would ever consider leaving to start a private practice. I couldn't imagine I would ever do that, but here I am!

When I was in college, I thought I wanted to be a lawyer. (It was kind of the family business.) I did so poorly on the LSAT my father kindly said, "Maybe try something else." I had no idea what else to do, I was so sure I was supposed to be a lawyer. I really struggled with how to be okay with my "failure." What I have come to realize in my journey is that the best path is not always what I thought it would be.

My family thought it was quite amusing when I became a hospice social worker. I had to drive all day (long before GPS) and I have no sense of direction. I also worked in a medical setting even though I can't stand the sight of blood. Still, it was the right career for me. I discovered that with enough maps and directions I would eventually find my way. If I was caring for a patient, I could do whatever was necessary to help that patient and family.

As I work with my clients in my practice, I try to help them change the negative narrative in their heads and help them find the right path for them. It is often difficult to find the strong compassionate parts of ourselves and use them to support us, but it is a skill set that can be learned and life can be so much better as a result.

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Out of My Comfort Zone

continued...

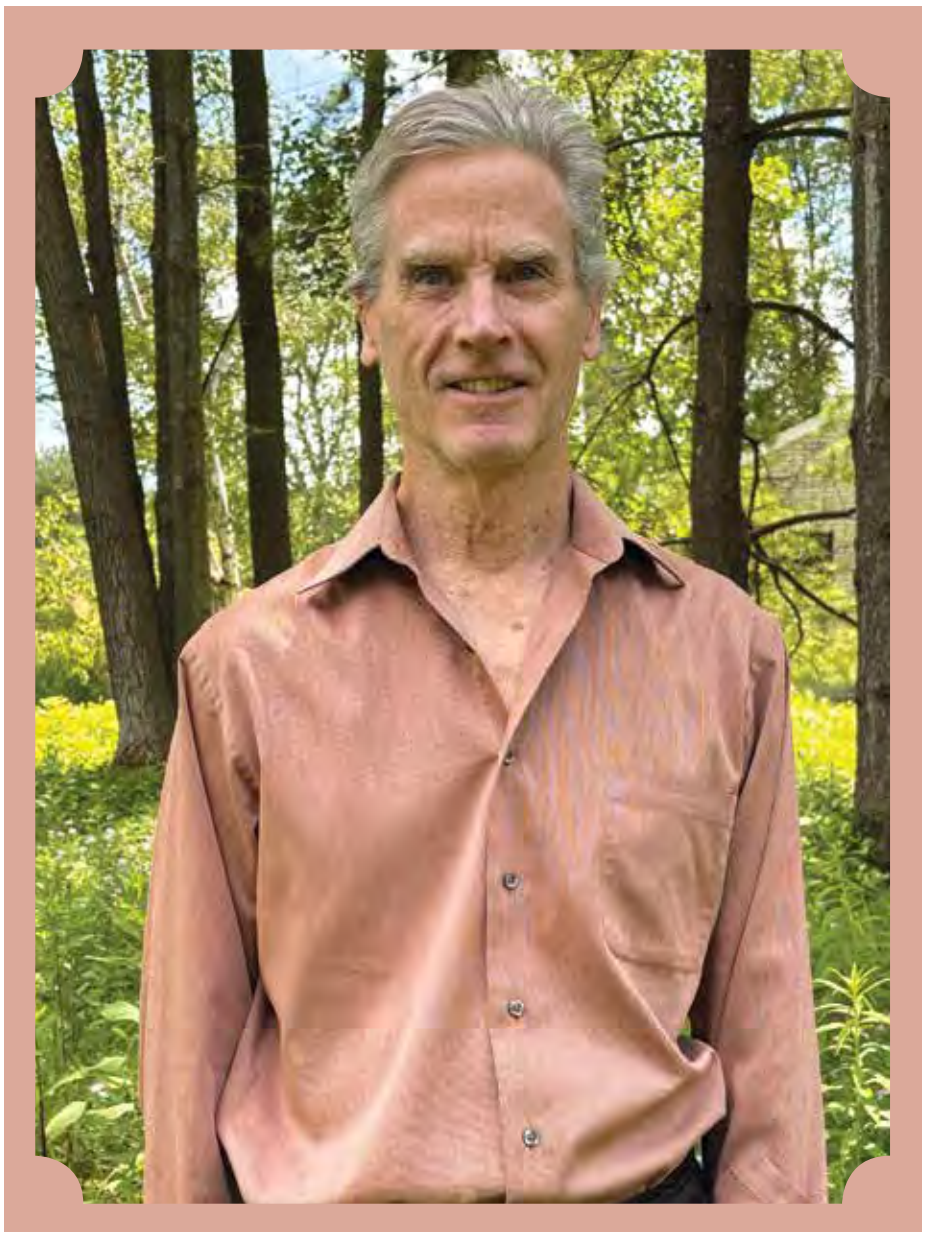
Brian O'Donnell, Ph.D has been a practicing psychotherapist in private practice for the past 49 years. He is also a senior teacher in the Great Lakes Pathwork. The Pathwork is a spiritual path that combines depth psychology and inner transformation. O'Donnell teaches, consults, and leads workshops in the United States, South America, Canada, Europe, Israel, and Asia. O'Donnell is committed athlete and meditator. He can be reached at Bodpath@aol.com or by calling (734) 213-2580.

THE ULTIMATE COMFORT ZONE

By Brian O'Donnell

Life is calling me out of the comfort zone of middle age to the forbidding territory of old age. Middle age isn't exactly my comfort zone either. If I'm honest I'm still clinging to youthfulness.

I miss the vitality of youth where the focus was on achievement, seduction, and risk taking. There was the constant thrill of expansion and unending discovery. Everything was in front of me. Life was filled with promise, the constant flow of new people, learning and developing physical mastery. My body was nimble and overflowing with boundless energy, libido, and beauty.



I realize that my youth had its perils as well: impulsiveness, chaos, intensity, plus the tumult of romance and its painful wake. Yet, I hold onto its idealization.

My middle years were devoted to settling down. I developed a successful career and built emotional and financial security. I opened the door to the ongoing nourishment of Spirit.

Gone was the swirl of new friendships and instead the deepening of those that I had. The excitement of younger years was still present but balanced with predictability and certainty. Maturity stabilized the excesses of youth. Innocence evolved into hard earned perspective.

My body has begun its inevitable diminishment which I have fought every step of the way. I still push myself daily at the gym lifting more weights, increasing my running time, adding extra laps in the pool. There is a life affirming energy in this, and it is also fueled by vanity and grasping for the past.

Life is calling me out of the comfort zone of middle age to the forbidding territory of old age. Middle age isn't exactly my comfort zone either. If I'm honest I'm still clinging to youthfulness.

When I look in the mirror, I wonder who that white haired man is who is looking back at me with such pathos. Aging is fraught with loss, decline, and grief. Aging ushers in and challenges the previously fortified denial of death. It is an uncomfortable new landscape to gaze upon. I want to look back and not ahead.

From my inner work I also intuit that old age has its own promise and gifts—wisdom, the softening of egoic pulls, profound surrender, and the full flowering of Love. There can be the liberating force of "nothing to prove." Gone will be

the perpetual focus on the past or the future and instead an embrace of the now moment will prevail.

Yet the entrance to this promised land is the deep acceptance of impermanence, imperfection, and frustration. This is my humbling and enlivening practice.

Being young has nothing on the kind of freedom and equanimity that emerges from this act of yielding to life on its own terms.

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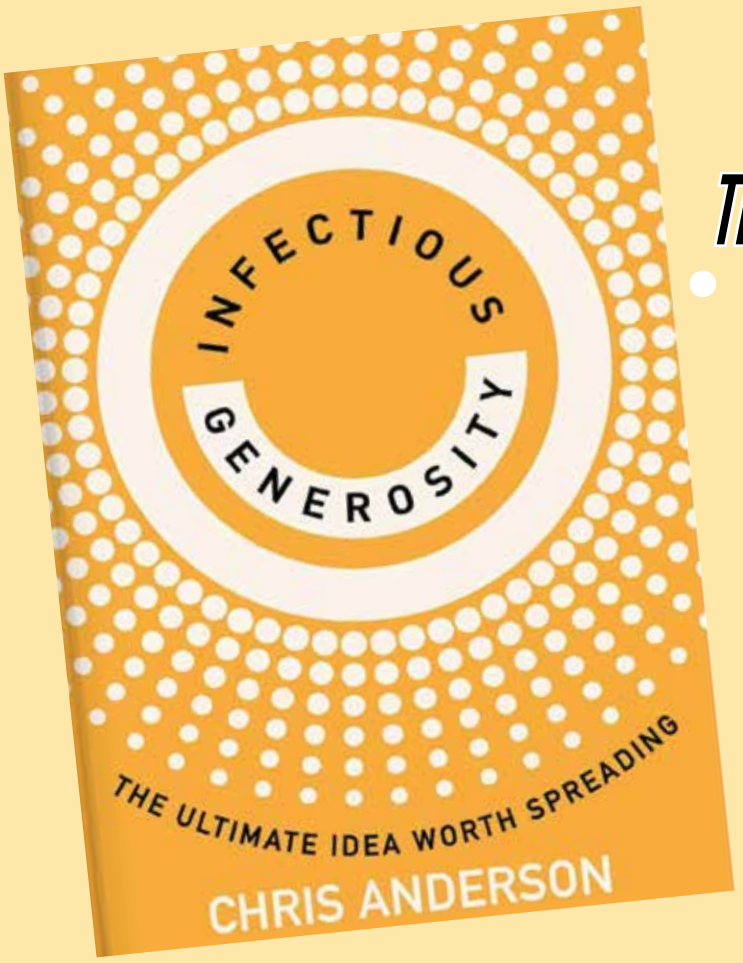
Book Review:

INFECTIOUS GENEROSITY: THE ULTIMATE IDEA WORTH SPREADING



By Christine MacIntyre

Infectious Generosity by Chris Anderson is a non-fiction book that delves into the transformative power of generosity as a force for positive change. The book argues that acts of kindness and giving can spread rapidly through society, like a contagious disease, creating a ripple effect of goodwill. Anderson, renowned for his work with TED Talks, draws on research and real-world examples to demonstrate how generosity can bring about profound transformations in individuals, businesses, and communities. The premise suggests that fostering a culture of giving can address global challenges and instill a sense of hope and inspiration, creating a more collaborative, compassionate world.

IT IS RICH IN REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES AND STORIES OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE EMBRACED AND BENEFITED FROM GENEROUS PRACTICES, INSPIRING AND MOTIVATING READERS TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF THEIR ACTIONS.

The book presents a series of arguments, case studies, and research findings to support its central thesis about the power of generosity. It is rich in real-world examples and stories of individuals and organizations that have embraced and benefited from generous practices, inspiring and motivating readers to consider the impact of their actions.

While not confined to a specific time or place, this work draws on contemporary examples and research, focusing on the present day, the recent past, and, of course, the future. It also explores how modern technology and social media have amplified the potential for generosity to spread, making the book's content highly relevant and engaging for readers.

Infectious Generosity is divided into three parts: Why, How, and What If? Each has no more than five chapters. Anderson captures readers' attention in the introduction, persuading them to rethink the infectious potential of generosity. He makes a compelling argument for believing that the internet can turbocharge generosity. He effectively conveys the urgency of his stance providing intriguing insights for readers to ponder.

In Part I, Anderson discusses the rising trend of infectious generosity. He shares significant events that convinced him of the internet's impact on generosity and outlines three fundamental principles he learned. He also provides new insights into human nature and the positive effects of practicing generosity. He discusses the "Mystery Experiment," a creative, if audacious, collaboration of a married couple, TED, and social scientists who set out to learn more about how generosity's effect on recipients and the ripple effect it can have.

In Part II, readers delve into transforming theories into real-world action. Anderson explains the art of cultivating a generous mindset, the diverse forms of giving that can lead to significant impact, and the power of sharing stories of generosity. Additionally, some chapters examine the crucial aspects of financial giving and leveraging our resources to maximize philanthropic impact such as through tithing or zakat.

Imagine a world where generosity is at the core of everything. Anderson uses part III of his book to explore how we can reclaim the internet to fulfill the vision of creating a more compassionate, kind world. He discusses how businesses and organizations can be reimagined through generosity and how we can empower impactful changemakers to bring about significant and daring transformations. Anderson also proposes a universal pledge for everyone to join a collective journey of generosity and consider ways to foster a mindset of generosity in our future selves.

Anderson utilizes entrepreneurs, philanthropists, and thought leaders who exemplify or study generous practices. He also includes ordinary individuals whose acts of generosity have had significant impacts. The text weaves these elements to build a compelling case for why and how readers can embrace and spread generosity in their lives and communities.

ANDERSON CAPTURES THE ESSENCE OF GENEROSITY BY DELVING INTO FASCINATING CONTENT LIKE SOCIAL MEDIA POLLS AND EXPERIMENTS, GRAPHS, TIMELESS PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS, AND BIOLOGY.

His perspective challenges the belief that larger systems result in decreased quality. He presents an interesting analogy by comparing the experience of three customers in a restaurant to that of thirty. According to him, having thirty customers inadvertently signals to others that the restaurant is worth visiting. This idea highlights a new way of thinking about generosity and emphasizes the interconnected nature of our modern world. Anderson also points out that, in today's society, we increasingly value non-material things which can be shared on a limitless scale while being observed by everyone. His straightforward and thought-provoking writing sheds light on new ways of understanding our surroundings and how generosity could work on a larger scale.

Anderson captures the essence of generosity by delving into fascinating content like social media polls and experiments, graphs, timeless philosophical teachings, and biology. He takes readers on a compelling journey, exploring how and why generosity develops in individuals. Additionally, he fearlessly delves into the gray areas uncovering the motivations behind generosity and the philanthropic endeavors of the ultra-rich. "The astonishing generosity shown every day by a parent looking after a severely disabled child is hard to compare with the generosity of the successful executive who, for the most part, expresses it financially," he says, for example.

He weaves practical, real-life examples into his narrative, making his insights come alive. He uses the Generous Coffee Shop in Denver, Colorado, as an example, stating that as customers enter the cafe, "they are greeted with a large bulletin board arrayed with hundreds of handwritten credit notes." One note might be ten dollars from one single mom to another. The concept of paying attention to a stranger is powerful, as demonstrated by several examples throughout the book.

ADDITIONALLY, HE FEARLESSLY DELVES INTO THE GRAY AREAS UNCOVERING THE MOTIVATIONS BEHIND GENEROSITY AND THE PHILANTHROPIC ENDEAVORS OF THE ULTRA-RICH.

The fascinating chapter, "Catalysts of Contagion," gets into the nitty-gritty of how to shift generosity from mundane and invisible to exponential. From biased attention to distorted social media algorithms, Anderson asserts that generosity can be captivating and contagious. To achieve this, he proposes five steps, such as "unlock real emotion" and "get insanely creative" which make generosity feel appealing…like a new game everyone wants to participate in.

Infectious Generosity aims to inspire readers through its practical advice and motivation such as breaking out of your comfort zone and creating meaningful work. Anderson's writing is relatable and down-to-earth, making the book highly personable.

From the beginning, I found myself in a reflective state of mind, and by the end, I was eager to put the book's teachings into action. Anderson provides guidance, fosters understanding, and equips readers with the tools to become change agents. After reading this book, readers may find themselves seeking opportunities to be more generous. "There's no single pathway to a generous life. But everyone can aspire to give more than they take."

What's New in the Community

By Lynda Gronlund

This ongoing column features upcoming events within Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County and surrounding areas' Body/Mind/Spirit communities, new (during the past year or two) practitioners and holistic businesses, new books written by local/regional authors, new classes, as well as new offerings by established practitioners and holistic businesses.

Jaren Bryson, Jeremy Tracey, and Nicholas Bhandari

Photo by Susan Ayer

2021 U of M graduate Jeremy Tracey opened Throw Art Studio in April of this year.

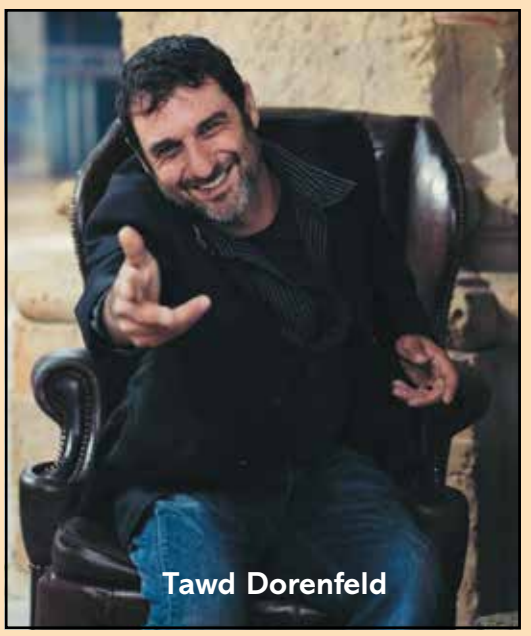
Throw offers pottery wheel throwing classes, hand building classes, and a monthly membership providing studio time and clay. The space is on the HOMES Brewery campus on the West side of Ann Arbor and regularly hosts "Throw & Sip" events where participants can try out wheel throwing while enjoying a drink from HOMES.

Read the article on page 30.

Photos of Throw Pottery by Susan Ayer

TINKTANK ANIMATE

Tink Tank Animate was founded in 2018 by writer, producer, director, and animator Tawd Dorenfeld.


Tawd Dorenfeld

Tink Tank is a center in Detroit that helps people on the autism spectrum and those with other forms of neurodiversity to learn the art of storytelling through their medium of choice, whether that be film, music, theater, animation, writing, illustration, or nearly anything one could think of to get a story across. Tink Tank is entering a new phase: it is in the process of transitioning to a 501c3 nonprofit organization to make it even more accessible to those who would benefit from its programs. This was always Dorenfeld's plan. He explained that he wanted to start the endeavor with a traditional business model in order to build a portfolio of work and plenty of evidence of the benefits of this type of artistic mentorship for neurodiverse children, teens, and adults. When nonprofits form, he explained, the first year is when they attract the most attention and financial support from businesses, organizations, and individuals. He wanted to maximize this initial support by being able to show Tink Tank's success with many finished projects and artists who have been positively affected.

Read the article on page 26.

BLOODROOT HERB SHOP

Corinne Denomme and Alex Crofoot opened Bloodroot Herb Shop on Michigan Avenue in downtown Ypsilanti in the late summer of 2023.

Alex Crofoot and Corinne Denomme

The shop offers over sixty loose leaf organic herbs which can be purchased by the ounce, a selection of herbal extracts, house-made herbal teas, house and garden plants, zines (self-published magazines), and Michigan-made products including skincare items, ceramics and décor, and more. They prioritize sourcing herbs from small American farms. Crofoot and Denomme also teach classes on Western energetic herbalism and offer health consultations. The shop facilitates vendor markets and hosts free community events and other gatherings.

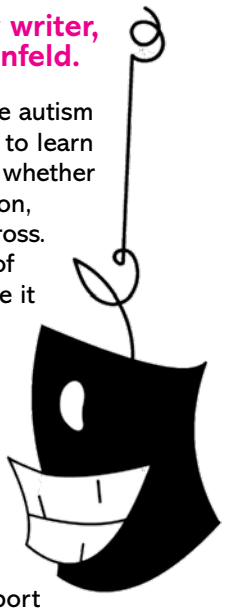
Read the article on page 31.

What's New in the Community

By Lynda Gronlund

New Offerings by Established Businesses and Practitioners

Tink Tank Animate was founded in 2018 by writer, producer, director, and animator Tawd Dorenfeld.



Tink Tank is a center in Detroit that helps people on the autism spectrum and those with other forms of neurodiversity to learn the art of storytelling through their medium of choice, whether that be film, music, theater, animation, writing, illustration, or nearly anything one could think of to get a story across. Tink Tank is entering a new phase: it is in the process of transitioning to a 501c3 nonprofit organization to make it even more accessible to those who would benefit from its programs. This was always Dorenfeld's plan. He explained that he wanted to start the endeavor with a traditional business model in order to build a portfolio of work and plenty of evidence of the benefits of this type of artistic mentorship for neurodiverse children, teens, and adults. When nonprofits form, he explained, the first year is when they attract the most attention and financial support from businesses, organizations, and individuals. He wanted to maximize this initial support by being able to show Tink Tank's success with many finished projects and artists who have been positively affected.

Tink Tank refers to the people it serves as "artists" not students. This, explained Dorenfeld, is because he wants them to feel empowered, and like a professional, even as a novice. The artists work with mentors— professionals who work in creative fields. Dorenfeld himself had a 25-year career in film in LA before moving to Detroit with his wife. He said that it is important that the mentors working for Tink Tank are professionals working in the field "so that the artists respect us."

His own beginning in working as a mentor to a neurodiverse artist came when a friend asked him to teach his daughter, who was on the autism spectrum, stop-motion animation. He had never taught anything before. She already enjoyed making sculptures and became so good at stop-motion animation that she eventually was admitted to California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) which is considered the best animation school in the United States. Her story got the attention of a school in LA called Exceptional Minds Academy which teaches vocational skills to autistic students who are interested in working in animation, visual effects, and related industries. They contacted Dorenfeld and asked him to teach for them. He didn't want to teach a full class, so he agreed to do some one-to-one teaching and small groups. This resulted in him working with the students who were most challenged and least suited to being in the larger classes. "They kind of put the wrong guy in the right room," said Dorenfeld. It turned out that the students in his room were making their own films while the other students were doing much simpler exercises. The school, which is a nonprofit, wanted Dorenfeld to work for them full time, but at the same time admitted that funding for the skills he wanted to teach was difficult to come by. Writing and directing were not considered "employable skills." He talked to the board of directors about wanting to build and fund this program, and they agreed it was a great idea, but at that point, he ended up moving to Detroit with his wife where he built the program himself in the form of Tink Tank.

The Tink Tank building, located on Livernois in Detroit, is a full studio equipped with a cyclorama soundstage, theater for plays and screenings, stop motion studio, vocal and music booths, and a digital lab with multiple computers. Dorenfeld has developed and implemented ways to work with neurodiverse artists that help them organize their thoughts and reduce the overstimulation often experienced in the storytelling process. Artists choose the mediums they are interested in and matched with mentors who know those mediums. "If there's something you want to get good at, we have someone who can help," he said. He noted that they focus on getting something completed, because "completion breeds success." After one project is complete, more can be taken on. The process, he explained, is therapeutic. Storytelling is self-expression, and Tink Tank's artists are "expressing themselves as a professional artist would express themselves." Artists come from the Detroit area and also from around the country through Zoom sessions. Dorenfeld said that the process of converting to a nonprofit organization will be complete around the end of 2024, and this will enable them to become a much bigger organization that can serve more people and support bigger projects including feature length films. He also intends to create a managerial and distribution section to the operation to help artists get their work out into the world. Tink Tank works with neurodiverse artists of all ages from eight to 100.

More information about Tink Tank Animate is online at tinktankanimate.com. Questions may be directed to info@tinktankanimate.com.

The People's Food Co-op in downtown Ann Arbor shut down their popular hot food bar and café during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The hot bar re-opened at the end of 2022 and the café followed suit at the end of 2023. However, explained general manager Angie Voiles, downtown work patterns and schedules had changed in the intervening years. In March of this year, the decision was made to discontinue the hot bar and café due to low sales. By listening to feedback from the community and examining buying patterns, the board of directors and general manager decided to transition the space to offer a greater variety of grocery items. The café area has been converted to a new bulk and unpackaged food section. "This aligns with our values of better value for the consumer and impact on the environment," said Voiles. She explained that the co-op is a small store, but despite this, "We try to be a one-stop shop as much as possible." This change has allowed the store to introduce more variety in grocery categories "that had been a little lacking." The new sections were unveiled in April and are still being tweaked and perfected.

Voiles added that co-op member benefits are being improved. As of July 1, members receive an additional 10% off of sale items every day. This used to apply only one day per month. "Grocery budgets are tight," she said, and shoppers have to make smart decisions about where to go and what to buy. About half of the co-op's shoppers are member-owners, she explained. For a $160 one-time fee, member owners buy into the co-op, having the option to help select the board of directors or run for the board if they choose. The store is run on a "participatory democratic model," and profits go back to the community. "The more people in the community that interact with us, the more we reflect the community," Voiles said. The co-op prioritizes "local, fair-trade, organic, sustainable" products. "You can feel good about where you're putting your money," she said. "We're not here to make someone rich; we're here to make the world a better place."

The People's Food Co-op is located at 216 North Fourth Avenue in Ann Arbor, MI 48104. General Manager Angie Voiles can be reached by email at gm@peoplesfood.coop or by phone at (734)212-0012. More information is available online at peoplesfood.coop.

Detroit-based Somatic Psychotherapist Faith Elie, LPC received a sex therapy certificate from the University of Michigan in March.

She is now incorporating sex therapy through a somatic lens in her private practice, Somatic Therapy Michigan. She has been in private practice since 2021 and sees clients in person in Detroit, and virtually from all over the state. She holds master's degrees in counseling and Jungian psychology, and certificates in Somatic Experiencing, and the NeuroAffective Relational Model (NARM). She is trained in internal family systems, psychedelic therapy, and sand tray therapy. Elie said that she decided to pursue the sex therapy certificate because she felt something was missing in her practice, and she wanted to feel like she was inviting the whole person into therapy. Many people in therapy for other things often have sex issues come up as well, and she wanted more tools to help them.

Elie specializes in trauma work, especially in helping people "feel safe in their body again after trauma." Her approach is holistic and incorporates the body, mind, and spirit. Somatic therapy is a body-based mindfulness approach that teaches the client to attend to what is going on in their bodies as they experience different emotions. This modality helps with anxiety, grief, depression, and sexual issues, she said. For clients that are open to it, Elie enjoys incorporating spiritual tools into sessions, such as tarot, astrology, rituals, or other spiritual elements that appeal to the individual. Another unique tool she uses is the sandtray: It's literally a tray full of sand along with a shelf of small objects clients can use to represent themselves, other people, feelings, or anything else they want to think and talk about. It is a kind of creative expression, she explained, and it can help people feel more embodied and express themselves in nonverbal ways.

Elie is LGBTQ affirming and polyamory affirming.

More information including an appointment request form is available on Faith Elie's website, somatic psychotherapy michigan.com. She can be reached via email at somaticpsychotherapymichigan@gmail.com. Her office is located at 18109 Livernois Avenue in Detroit, MI 48221.

Yuliya Koval is a 4th generation herbalist originally from Ukraine.

She makes a variety of herbal products including skin creams, poultices, tinctures, herbal honey, and bath mixtures. She harvests many of the herbs used in her products by hand from around her home in White Lake: violets, chamomile, rose, mint, catnip, lavender, pine, nettle, raspberry, dandelion, and more. She periodically sells her products at farmer's markets and artisan markets in Plymouth and Ann Arbor and considers them to be "a bridge between art and nature." They are also available to order from her website. It is important to her to provide products with no harmful chemicals, and reducing the use of, and exposure to, harmful chemicals in the household is one of her passions.

She introduced a "New Mommy Care Pack" in February, containing herbal tea, belly ointment, calming essential oils roller, and lavender milk bath. All contain natural ingredients and herbs designed to soothe and care for the postpartum mom and come in a gift box.

Another new product is her therapeutic lotion candle which was introduced in April. The candle is lit to melt the lotion, then applied warm to the skin. It contains cocoa butter, shea butter, beeswax, apricot oil, and essential oils. The warmth provides a soothing experience, and the wax/lotion is highly moisturizing.

Koval is also a Reiki practitioner recently achieving certificates in Reiki and shamanism. She practices out of the Wellness center of Plymouth incorporating Reiki, essential oils, touch, foot reflexology, and music to heal the mind, body, and energy field. She specializes in helping people with lymphatic drainage, post-cancer treatment, and adenoid problems, but works with many different health and emotional issues.
She also hosts workshops on holistic healing topics including plant medicine, crystals, essential oils, and sound healing. On October 20 she will host a workshop on self-Reiki healing at her home in White Lake.
For more information, see Yuliya's website yuliyasnaturals.com. Yuliya Koval can be reached by email at ykoval7@yahoo.com.

New Books by Area Authors

Nicole Beverly is the author of *Finding Nicole: a True Story of Love, Loss, Domestic Violence, Betrayal, Fear, and Hope.*

The book was published in 2020, and a movie based on the book will be released later this year. An audiobook version is in production as well. *Finding Nicole* tells the story of Beverly's abusive marriage, and what happened after she left. The story is shocking both in the actions of her ex-husband and in the failure of law enforcement at several levels that left her and her children in danger repeatedly. Even now, Beverly knows that when her ex-husband is released from prison, she will need to disappear, as there is really no protection for her and her children from a man who has stalked them and many times threatened and attempted to hire people to kill them even while in prison. For now, she is determined to help other women and girls prevent the situation she found herself in, advocate for better services and resources for the women that do leave abusive relationships, and to spread hope to victims.

Beverly started a nonprofit organization called The ENOUGH (Education Nonviolence Opportunity Understanding Growth & Hope) Initiative which offers domestic violence awareness and prevention presentations to schools, colleges, and youth groups. This training teaches the red flags of dating violence and abusive relationships which often begin with emotional abuse. National data states that one in three teenagers in the United States will experience dating violence, and that young women ages 16-24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence. Beverly frequently encounters teens and young adults who have already been affected. She is heartened when, occasionally, young men approach or email her asking for resources when they notice the red flags in themselves and want to course correct.

ENOUGH has also sponsored several self-defense workshops led by local martial arts instructors Brandon Lockman and Jackie Montalvo and firearms instructor Paul Corey. She said that since there are so few resources to help keep women safe leaving abusive relationships, they should at least be taught to defend themselves. Beverly said she found empowerment in Krav Maga training after leaving her ex-husband.

Beverly was invited by Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel earlier this year to help plan and participate in a roundtable discussion with victims, advocacy organizations, and law enforcement. Issues discussed included the need for housing for spouses leaving domestic violence as shelters are constantly full; section eight housing has been put on indefinite hold, and victims leaving an abusive marriage often have little to no money to obtain shelter. Other topics cover the need for better communication between law enforcement in different cities and counties as well as in the prison system. One of the problems Beverly encountered multiple times while trying to get her ex-husband to stop stalking her and even trying to hire people to kill her from prison, was that different law enforcement organizations don't communicate with one another effectively and there are no central databases for charges and encounters between agencies. She is also working on several legislative bills with her state representative. One has already passed—the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP)—which has the goal of preventing abuse survivors from being found by their abusers using public records.

Beverly will be speaking at a number of events for Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October, and she is available for speaking engagements. She is a clinical social worker, a State of Michigan Expert Witness on domestic violence and sexual assault, a Trauma Informed Care Practitioner, and is Behavior Threat Assessment and Management certified.

"Autumn...the year's last, loveliest smile."
— William Cullen Bryant

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She said that, though her story of leaving her abuser was harrowing and traumatic, "I never want my story to discourage anyone from leaving. Even though I had to go through some very dark times it was still one hundred percent worth it." She said that her philosophy is to always choose hope over fear, "Because if I had given in to fear I'd still be in that situation." She is always willing to help people find a way out. "Survivors carry those lanterns to help others," she said.

More information on Nicole Beverly, her book, and upcoming movie are available at nicolebeverly.com. She can be reached via email through the contact form on her website. More information about the ENOUGH Initiative is at the-enoughinitiative.com.

Upcoming Events

On Sunday, November 3, Lisa Salisbury of Sky's The Limit will host a workshop on "Harmony Within: Aligning Mind, Body & Soul."

The workshop will be at 7 Notes Natural Health on Packard in Ann Arbor, and will include tools for stress reduction, information on meditation, tapping and journaling, a sound bath, self-love techniques, mindful movement, and information about nutrition as we age. Salisbury said that the workshop is meant to be an introduction for people who are new to holistic health and healing. It is designed to be interactive and personalized, as participants will be polled beforehand about what they hope to receive from the experience and broken up into smaller groups for individual attention during the event.

Salisbury is a certified mindfulness teacher and active movement coach. Her co-presenters include Melissa Bila Regan, a Registered Nurse, health coach, grief coach, mindfulness teacher, and yoga teacher; Laura Main, a certified personal trainer and Alzheimer's specialist; and Rob Meyer-Kukan, owner of 7 Notes, Reiki healer, sound healer, body worker, and energy therapist.

Salisbury is relatively new to the mindfulness space. She began her mindfulness journey in the last few years and got certified in May. She said, "so many people don't realize what they can do to help themselves" especially in a post-pandemic world that seems like it is "swirling out of control." She is using her prior event planning experience as she brings forward this workshop which she hopes will be the first of many. She said, "my passion is helping others grow and find their own message. My impact currently as a professional is developing programs that help inspire and bring out the best in everyone."

Salisbury described the 7 Notes location as "a beautiful facility" that feels "like you're wrapped in a hug." There are several smaller rooms which will help facilitate the portions of the workshop where participants will be put into smaller groups. This workshop is adult focused but there is no specific age requirement.

More information and online registration are available at skysthelimit.my.canva.site/sky-s-the-limit-website. Lisa Salisbury can be reached by email at Salisburylisa5@gmail.com or by phone at (248)719-4034. 7 Notes Natural Health is located at 3830 Packard Street Suite 120 in Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104, and the 7 Notes website is 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Dances of Universal Peace is a spiritual group practice that incorporates dance, live music, and chant to evoke an experience of unity, peace, and integration.

The dances are practiced in 58 countries and draw on the scriptures, poetry, and sacred phrases of many spiritual traditions. Simple folk dance movements are taught by dance leaders as participants join hands, dance, and chant or sing in a circle. On Friday December 13, Certified Dances of Universal Peace Leader Susan Slack will host a gathering at the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth on Airport Boulevard in Ann Arbor. This gathering will welcome the winter solstice.

Slack is new to Ann Arbor, having moved here recently after 25 years in Florida to be closer to her son, grandchildren, and nephews. She is originally from Buffalo, New York. She got involved in the Universal Dances 45 years ago, after divorcing and moving back to her hometown, where she encountered a flyer and showed up for a gathering. "It was not at all what I was expecting," she said. She was also taking ballet and modern dance classes at the time, and this was something much different from what she was used to. But, she said, it felt good,

What's New in the Community

By Lynda Gronlund

and like something she needed. She was already a professional musician, singer, drummer, and actor, so it felt natural that after a few months with the Universal Dances the leader of her group asked if she would be interested in leading a group in a town nearby that had people asking for a more local group. At the time, there was no certification process, but she was diligent in learning and making sure to correctly present the dances and words from different religions. There were many people from the practice that she could ask questions and learn from, which she has done over the years.

Upon moving to Ann Arbor, Slack looked for a group and found one, but with the pandemic it had sort of fizzled out, and the leader was ready to retire. Slack found herself reviving the Ann Arbor group which had long met at the Friends Meeting House prior to the pandemic. When she first tried to revive the dances, she said it was like "trying to start up a rusty engine." She felt it was time for a change in location and found the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth. The Center seemed very much in alignment with the Universal Dances, and they were "very welcoming for someone who didn't know anyone but family here," she said. This new start of the Universal Dances in Ann Arbor, she said, is being received very well. The last gathering had around 15 people, and she hopes for more at the next. There is a suggested donation of $10 to attend, but no one is turned away. Slack said that leading the group is an act of service for her. "This is for your health, the health of the world, community," she explained. "It's your heart that's the whole point…. attuning yourself to a more relaxed, open-hearted self." Everyone is welcome, and "if you're alone, you won't be alone anymore." People with disabilities will be accommodated for.

More information about the worldwide Dances of Universal Peace is available online at dancesofuniversalpeace.org. Susan Slack can be reached via email at peaceinacircle@gmail.com and her website is slacksusan.wixsite.com/susan-j-slack.

"And the sunsets of Autumn – are they not gorgeous beyond description? More so than the brightest dreams of poetry?"

— Charles Lanman

New Classes

Washtenaw Meats began in the spring of 2021 with Sarah Schloss and Colleen Dauw, both Dexter-based small livestock farmers with big families who met through their children's 4-H club.

Sarah Schloss

Colleen Dauw

As their friendship developed, they started collaborating on projects between their two farms allowing each to operate more efficiently and grow. They started by raising meat chickens together: Schloss would brood enough chickens for both farms, keep half of the chicks, and send the other half to Dauw's farm. Once the birds were ready, they sold them together. They ended up raising turkeys this way as well, and then they collaborated on tanning sheepskin pelts from the sheep they each raised, making sheepskin rugs, and sharing the profits.

As these projects were all successful, they began thinking of more ways to collaborate, not only with each other, but with other local small farms. During the spring of 2021, small livestock farmers were having difficulty getting butcher slots for their animals. For meat sold at farmers' markets or in any retail format, it must be butchered by a USDA certified butcher. Since some of the larger slaughterhouses had shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the large and mid-scale livestock farms were filling up butcher slots that would have usually been used by small farmers before. Finding a certified butcher to process only a few animals was nearly impossible. Schloss and Dauw decided to pool animals from their farms and others together to be able to access butchering

services more easily. They would commit a certain number of animals per month to be butchered, and it was up to them to organize animals from the different farms to be brought in. This worked well, and Schloss and Dauw realized they could also pool their resources to more easily sell to customers through a website that listed meats from various farms for purchase. This way the customer looking for meat from small local farms could find what they needed easily from just one site. The website states, "By working together, we strengthen area farmers and processors while bringing high quality, nutritious, safe, and humanely raised meat products to households, restaurants, and stores." Washtenaw Meats partner farms are located throughout southeast Michigan.

Earlier this year, Schloss collaborated with Chef Maggie Long of the Jolly Pumpkin Artisan Ales & Kitchen in Dexter to create a Farm-to-Table Community Dinner series. This started as a monthly cooking class, said Schloss, followed by a community dinner for the students and anyone else who wanted to attend serving the food the students had made. Long, who Schloss described as "a wonderful and creative chef [who] loves to teach," puts a lot of effort into sourcing local, seasonal meat and produce to create dishes from scratch. One focus of the cooking classes is using cuts of meat that most home cooks may not feel confident with. One event centered around cooking a whole chicken, another used pork chops; the July event featured fried chicken, and another used a quarter lamb roast.

During the summer, Long has not been offering the cooking class component of the events, but this will be returning for the fall. All of the meat used for these events are sourced from one of Washtenaw Meats' local partner farms. The farmer who raised the meat is usually at the meal, for participants to meet and talk to, and to "get the recognition of their high-quality local meat," said Schloss.

The farm-to-table events happen on the last Tuesday of every month at Jolly Pumpkin. Schloss said that Long has "a beautiful kitchen, very clean, with lots of workspace." Six to eight students take the class and do the meal preparation. Dinner afterward is available to anyone who would like to come. The dinner theme is based on the meat and vegetables that are available locally at the time. Said Schloss, "We're doing these in part to get people out of their homes to come and meet each other in an informal setting, but also to try to make people aware of local meat: that it's available, and very easy to access now." She said that the series offers wholesome, nutritious meals as well as a sense of community and connection, and knowledge of where our food comes from and the sustainable practices that local farmers use.

The Jolly Pumpkin Artisan Ales & Kitchen is located at 2319 Bishop Circle East in Dexter, MI 48130. The Washtenaw Meats website is washtenawmeats.com. Questions can be sent to eat@washtenawmeats.com.

New Practitioners and Businesses

2021 U of M graduate Jeremy Tracey opened Throw Art Studio in April of this year.

Throw offers pottery wheel throwing classes, hand building classes, and a monthly membership providing studio time and clay. The space is on the HOMES Brewery campus on the West side of Ann Arbor and regularly hosts "Throw & Sip" events where participants can try out wheel throwing while enjoying a drink from HOMES.

Tracey said that he got into pottery in 2021, during the height of Covid-19 pandemic isolation. He got a wheel and put it in his bedroom at first creating pieces without a kiln. Eventually he acquired a kiln that he placed in his sister's garage. "It's not a cheap hobby," he said, since a lot of equipment is needed. This is part of why he decided to open Throw.

After graduating with a business degree from the University of Michigan, he was working for Google as a digital marketing consultant. He said he liked the work but had always had an "entrepreneurial itch." At the same time, he was excited about pottery and wanted different equipment available for his own use while also making the hobby much more accessible to others who wanted to try it. "It lends itself well to a community studio setting," he said.

Tracey said he has hosted teambuilding events for businesses and had a lot of fun with them. He has been working on a variety of one-time and multiple-session events for people to learn, experiment, and have fun with pottery.

This summer, Throw hosted a half-day summer camp for ages five to 12. Tracey said that while some of the classes at Throw are geared toward adults and teens, "we're super kid friendly," and they love to show children how to work on the wheel, with appropriate training and supervision. Kids aged 10 and up are welcome to join the regular Try Wheel Throwing classes, and younger children can enroll in the Kid & Adult Wheel Throwing classes which offer specialized equipment and instruction.

Those who want ongoing access to the studio and materials can purchase a membership which includes drop-in studio time and what Tracey described as "a lot of clay." At the time of writing there are around ten members; Tracey said membership will be capped at around 30 to make sure the studio never gets overly crowded. It is a large warehouse space staffed during drop-in times with a technician who can resolve any issues with equipment. Members can choose a weekend or weekday membership; anyone who wants access for all six open days can purchase both memberships.

For the fall and early winter, Tracey said there are several events in the planning stages. In October, there will be Halloween-themed workshops, and in November there will be holiday gift-making sessions. Dates and details will be published online as they are finalized.

Looking to the future as the business continues to evolve in its first year, Tracey said that he would love for artists to start showcasing their work in the space, and to create a small gathering area where people can sit and chat. He is working on offering more pottery painting and glazing opportunities.
Throw Pottery Studio is located at 130 Jackson Plaza, in Ann Arbor, MI 48103. More information is available online at throwannarbor.com. The studio can be reached by email at support@throwannarbor.com or by phone at (734)776-8832.

Teddy Bear Talk is a way of harnessing the power of speaking out loud to help people think more clearly and solve problems.

Creator Leeann Fu was inspired by a story she heard: in the 1990s there was a university technical support center that had a teddy bear at the desk to greet visitors. The rule was that before you could speak to a technician, you had to explain the problem to the teddy bear. In many cases, the person solved their own problem by explaining it out loud, and so the technicians saved a lot of time assisting with problems that didn't really need their help. Fu realized that she had seen this dynamic in action: her best friend lives in London and is a researcher. Fu doesn't know much about this friend's area of research, but she often listens to them on the phone talking about it, giving the standard occasional "mmhmm" responses. During these conversations, her friend is often able to clarify an idea or solve a problem. Fu was serving the same role as the tech support teddy bear, and it was helping her friend figure things out! She decided to take the idea further and started using it with her partner. They would trade places serving as the "teddy bear" and being the talker. She noticed many insights, large and small, from this process.
As she experimented with the technique with her partner and others, she realized that while the "teddy bear" largely functions as a passive listener, they can add to the experience if the talker requests it by doing a few things. A talker may ask that a "teddy bear" reflect a few things back to them, or that

they ask some reflective questions. Mainly though, the "teddy bear's" role is to listen. "Teddy bears don't try to fix or bring up their own concerns or their own agenda. Instead, the intention of Teddy Bear Talk is to leave plenty of room … for the talker to take things wherever the talker wants to go, giving [them] more access to their own truth and their own inner wisdom."

In December of 2023, Fu began facilitating online workshops using Teddy Bear Talk. As a co-facilitator of Empowering Wisdom parenting circles, she thought this might be a helpful technique for parents to use with their children, and she offered workshops specifically for parents as well. On Sunday October 20th she will offer a one-hour online workshop at 4:00 p.m. for everyone. On Sunday November 17th she will host a one-hour workshop specifically for parents at 7:00 p.m.

More information is available online at teddybeartalk.com. Leann Fu can be reached by email at teddybear@teddybeartalk.com or by phone at (734) 237-7676.

Corinne Denomme and Alex Crofoot opened Bloodroot Herb Shop on Michigan Avenue in downtown Ypsilanti in the late summer of 2023.

BLOODROOT HERB SHOP

The shop offers over sixty loose leaf organic herbs which can be purchased by the ounce, a selection of herbal extracts, house-made herbal teas, house and garden plants, zines (self-published magazines), and Michigan-made products including skincare items, ceramics and décor, and more. They prioritize sourcing herbs from small American farms. Crofoot and Denomme also teach classes on Western energetic herbalism and offer health consultations. The shop facilitates vendor markets and hosts free community events and other gatherings.

Denomme has been running an herbal product business, White Pine Rising, for over nine years. She has also taught nature connection programs and natural dye workshops. Crofoot is a co-owner of Black Locust Gardens, an organic herb farm in Dexter and the founder of the Community Care Camper which is a free mobile herb clinic serving underserved populations in Ann Arbor and surrounding areas. She is a coordinator for the Great Lakes Herb Faire and a full spectrum doula. Both Crofoot and Denomme have studied herbalism for over a decade and are passionate about making herbalism accessible to everyone regardless of income level.

The pair wanted their shop to be a "stable gathering space" where they can "geek out on plants with others and build resiliency in reciprocal relationships with our community." They wanted a place where they could practice their activism and herbalism, serve the community, and "create jovial experiences within the oppressive structures we live under." They offer sliding scale options and regularly host mutual aid medicine making days where community members create and distribute herbal medicines for unhoused and underserved people in the community.

They had originally thought to set up shop in Ypsilanti's Depot Town, but once they saw the Michigan Avenue space they knew it was the right one, and they are happy to be part of downtown Ypsilanti's business revival. The historic brick building retains its original wood flooring, and Crofoot and Denomme have furnished it with vintage pieces and decorated throughout with dried plants and flowers giving it a cozy feel. They offer upstairs and downstairs space rentals for events, classes, art shows, performances, and whatever else the community may come up with.

Upcoming events at the shop include monthly Death Café meetings with Hanna Hasselschwert, classes on herbalism, botany, basket weaving and crafts, mutual aid community medicine making / distribution days, a Samhain potluck, and an indoor holiday vendor's market in partnership with the shop's neighbor, Ziggy's bar. Dates and times are available online.

Bloodroot Herb Shop is located at 208 W Michigan Avenue, in Ypsilanti MI 48917. The website is bloodrootherbshop.com. The shop can be reached by phone at (734) 802-5408 or by email at bloodrootherbshop.mi@gmail.com.

Submit your listing

for the January through April 2025 issue.

Please note that the "What's New in the Community" column is part of the editorial (not paid-for-advertising) part of the CW Journal, and the editors may or may not include what you submit. Whether the editors include material or not will depend on space considerations, as well as other editorial issues, such as the need for high resolution jpgs and the overall mix of stories included in the "What's New in the Community" column in a given issue.

If you would like to submit information to be considered for this column, please email communitynews@crazywisdom.net.

The firm deadline for submissions for the next issue (January thru April 2025) is XXXXXX X, 2024.

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YOGA COLUMN

Namaste, Katie...

Whether you're a seasoned yogi or getting ready to roll out your mat for the first time, here you'll find a variety of useful tips from local yoga instructor, Katie Hoener.

Katie Hoener is a RYT 500, receiving her 200 and 500 hour trainings. She is also a Licensed Master Social Worker and a partner at Verapose Yoga in Dexter (veraposeyoga.com). Please send your own yoga questions to katie@veraposeyoga.com.

Namaste Katie,

My Aunt traveled to Southeast Asia years ago and is telling me that when she was there that a part of her yoga practice was fasting and cleansing. I am not comfortable with that as part of my practice. Is that something you are able to shed any light on?

Astrid, Ann Arbor

Dear Astrid,

Yoga consists of eight limbs, the first two being the Yamas and the Niyamas. These are often considered the code of conduct which guide the practice. Each of these limbs contains five directions to follow for a content life that moves us toward *Samadhi*, the bliss state, which is the final limb. Embedded in the Niyamas is Saucha, or Purity. If we look at the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika,* one of our foundational texts, we see a wide range of purification techniques. Most of these we would balk at today, and some are still in practice, such as fasting.

I always come back to the core tenet of yoga—the quieting of the mind. If a practice does not move you in that direction, let it go. Not every aspect of the yoga tradition needs to be for every person. For some, reducing digestive distress and feeling lighter is a way to make sitting for meditation easier. For others it adds an additional burden to the practice. Saucha may look very different for you: it may be drinking enough water, moving the body, or dedicating time each day to your meditation practice. You get to determine the look of your journey. Enjoy!

If we look at the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, one of our foundational texts, we see a wide range of purification techniques. Most of these we would balk at today, and some are still in practice, such as fasting.

Namaste Katie,

I have been to a class of late that offers a half split, and it scares me a bit. Other people in the class seem to be enjoying it, yet I am afraid to try it. Is there a way to *sort of* try it?

Rick, Ann Arbor

Dear Rick,

This is a wonderful question. There are postures that scare me too! Sometimes I look for modifications, and sometimes I do not, and say to myself, that posture is for other people. If you decide that Ardha Hanumanasana, Half Split, is for you, there is a way to explore the space, and a way to modify the posture to see if this is a posture for you to integrate into your practice.

Recently we explored the posture Parsvottanasana, Pyramid pose, which is a standing forward fold where the feet are hips distance apart and stepped out short of Warrior One length. This fold forward can be done with hands on the body or hand on blocks. Pyramid can be a posture to explore the opening in the hamstrings.

To explore Ardha Hanumanasana, we come to all fours and step one foot forward into a low lunge. The front knee can be at a 90-degree angle, or you may wish to lean forward into the lunge, keeping the hips facing the front of the mat. From Low Lunge, we are going to lift back into a neutral space and start to draw the hips toward the back of the mat, and just like with the low lunge, we want to keep the pelvis neutral. As we draw the pelvis back, the front leg can straighten as much as feels good. When I engage with this posture, I use at least one block, and some days two. This allows us to find the right amount of release through the back of the legs and glutes without forcing or overdoing it. See what level of support assists you in keeping the heart lifted. If these options do not make the posture feel safe, let it go. When your class practices this posture, shift to something that brings you joy.

There are postures that scare me too! Sometimes I look for modifications, and sometimes I do not, and say to myself, that posture is for other people.

Trying to squeeze in a practice and force in a little bit of relaxation is not the intention of yoga as the place to quiet the mind through its systematic process.

Namaste Katie,

This year I have felt myself rushing more and more. I have found it difficult to shift from work to my practice. My partner suggested I try practicing in the morning, and that is not feeling right. This feels like a basic question, yet here I am!

Mo, Ypsilanti

Hi Mo,

I can relate to that, and the idea of rushing our way into a yoga class is a very Western concept. Trying to squeeze in a practice and force in a little bit of relaxation is not the intention of yoga as the place to quiet the mind through its systematic process. Nowhere in the Yoga Sutras does it mention running from class to class!

All that to say, we have all likely had moments where our practice felt frenzied. One technique to settle into our space is to sit within the pauses. As we roll out our mats and sit down, or lay down, we can take a pause. If it feels safe, close your eyes and connect with the breath. Take note of the pauses between the breath, the space between the inhale and the exhale as well as the space between the space exhale and the inhale. See if those transition areas offer any room to quiet the mind and make the shift into practice space a little easier.

Another practice element that develops our focus on the pauses is Box Breathing. In this pranayama practice we breathe in for a count of four, hold for four, breath out for four, hold for four, and start again. If the pauses, or holds, here cause distress, we shorten them up and build over time. As we grow accustomed to the pause, our hope is that we can transfer this feeling to other spaces in which we may be feeling rushed and start to slow down and take notice.

Conscious & Tasty

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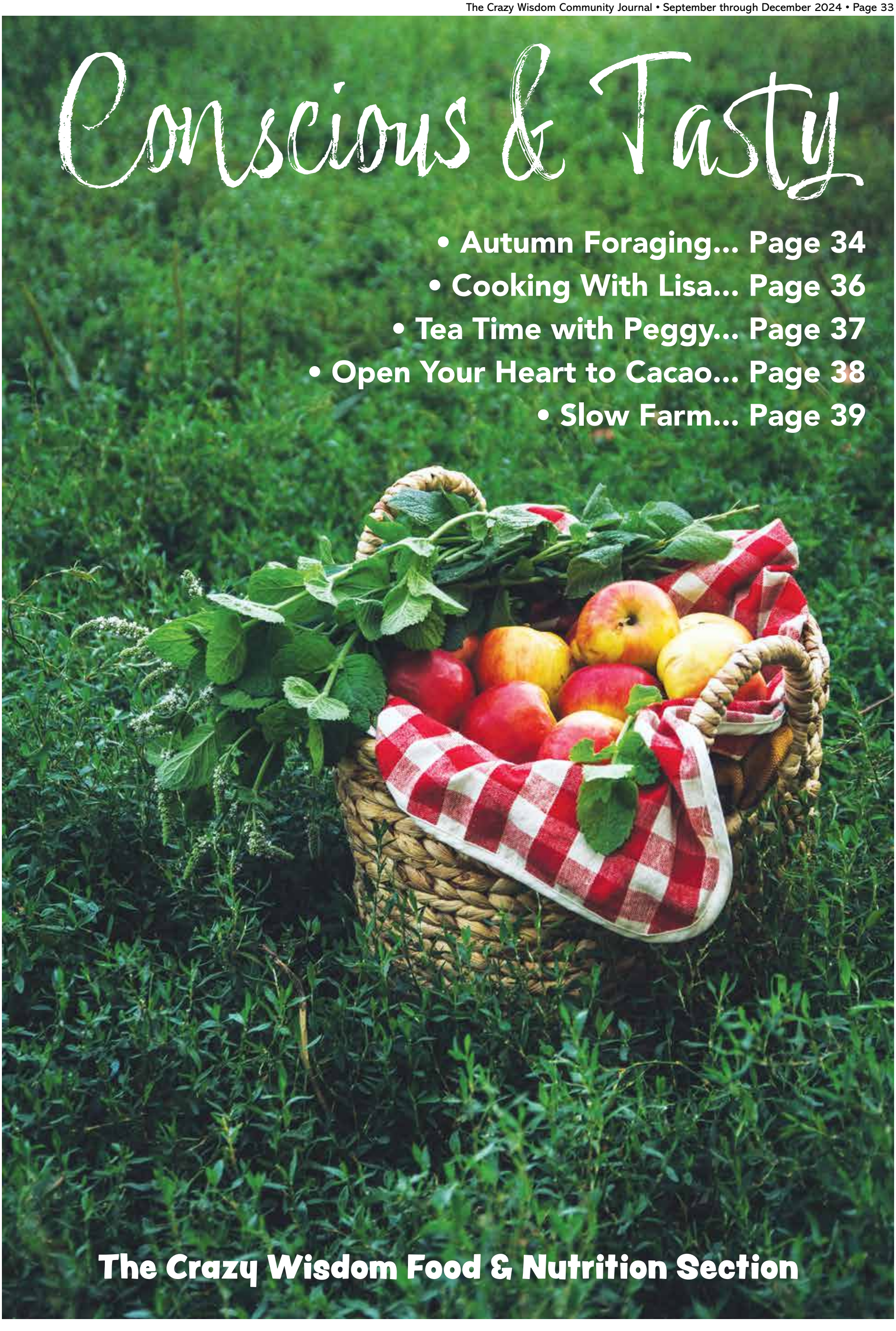


The Crazy Wisdom Food & Nutrition Section

Autumn Foraging

By Karen Quinn

There is something romantic and melancholy about the Earth Mother closing out the heat of summer and preparing herself for the cold winter's embrace. We instinctively feel the shift and are compelled to engage with the natural world, seeking to bask in the cascades of warm yellows, reds, and oranges in the trees and almost methodically find our way to apple orchards, pumpkin patches, and forests to take in the beauty and bounty of the season.

As you find yourself wandering, I invite you to explore and engage with the flora around you and enjoy the excitement of self-sufficient foraging, even if it's only a little. The best part is most wild edibles can be found in your very own neighborhood or local park!

Chicken of the Woods: Its distinct shape, color, and growing habits, in addition to its lack of poisonous "look-alikes," make it a wonderful option for first time foragers!

Chicken of the Woods

The Chicken of the Woods is an edible mushroom that comes from the *Laetiporus sulphureus* family. Its distinct shape, color, and growing habits, in addition to its lack of poisonous "look-alikes," make it a wonderful option for first time foragers! The Chicken of the Woods, sometimes referred to as the Chicken Mushroom, grows on both living trees and rotten logs or stumps. The younger fungus ranges from bright yellow to orange, older, well-established colonies can even have a tint of ruddy red mixed in. When the fungus gets older, it turns more to a pale yellow and white. You want to harvest the mushroom when it is young for the best texture and flavor which is said to be how it got its namesake. The texture is described to be much like cooked chicken and the flavor lends itself in that direction as well. This makes this mushroom a forageable wonder for vegetarians as a chicken substitute in recipes. That's my family's favorite way of utilizing them—especially in soups and stir fries. Simply wash off any debris, chop them up in the desired configuration, and treat them like any other meat or mushroom.

If you have a plentiful harvest and want to preserve your bounty for later, there are a few options I have used that have worked very well. You can freeze them by washing them and then sweating them in butter. This is done by adding them to a hot pan of butter and sauteing them just slightly to get a layer of fat on the surface of the mushroom. Allow them to cool, then put them in a vacuum sealed bag or a Ziplock with as much air removed as possible. Another way is to slowly dehydrate them by placing them on a baking sheet or dehydrator rack in the oven at its lowest setting and turning them every 30 minutes if on a baking sheet. After all the water is removed, put them in an airtight container, and store in a cool, dark area. When you are ready to use them, gather your desired amount, and place it in a bowl of water for 10-30 minutes to rehydrate it; then, cook as normal.

Black Walnuts

The Black Walnut tree, or the *Juglans nigra*, is a native tree to North America that is both prized and despised equally. On one hand, they are a constant source of nuts, and their wood is prized by woodworkers for its beauty and versatility. On the other hand, they are messy, and the juglone they produce can wipe out anything in the nightshade or *solanacea* family (tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, potatoes) that are planted too close to them. I have five old black walnuts in my backyard, and I can personally say I fall into both sides of the argument. I love their gifts of abundant free nuts each fall, but they truly are messy and have been the reason for more than one of my tomato growing failures. But, in the bigger picture, I love them.

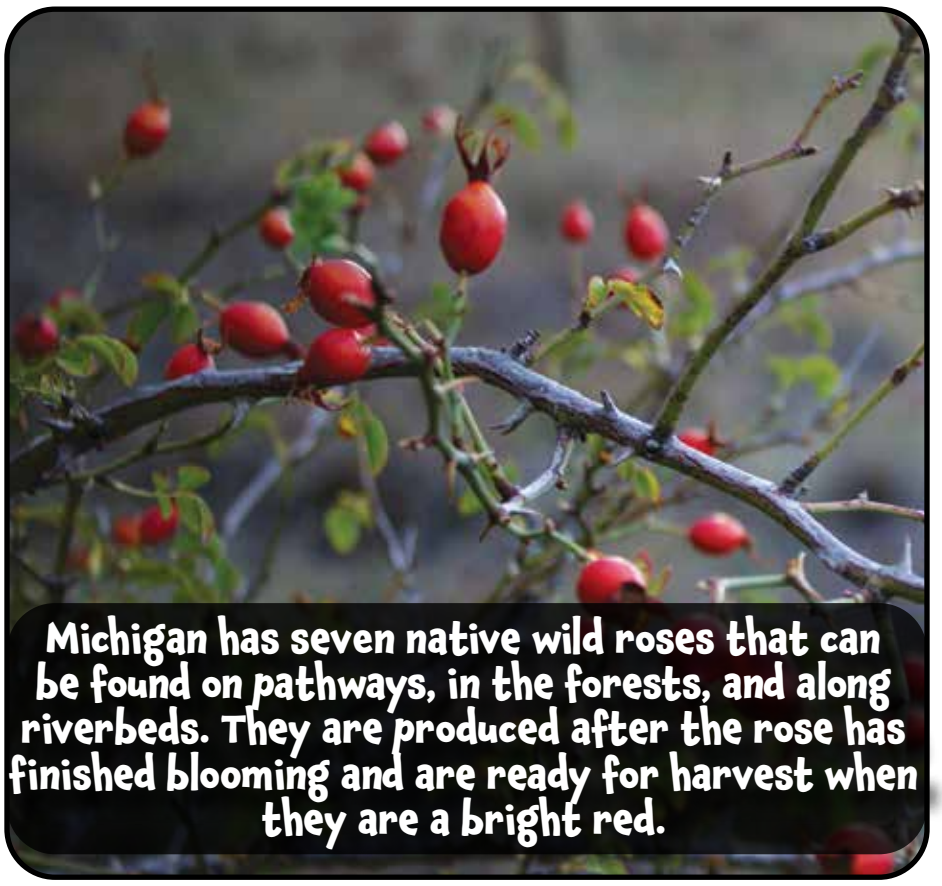
Black walnuts grow inside a rind that looks and smells like a lemon upon first inspection. When they are ripe, they naturally fall from the tree, so if it's on the ground it's typically ready to harvest. We use a tool that is meant to pick up golf balls: it resembles a wire ball on a handle. It rolls over the ground and picks the ripe walnuts up for us. Then, we empty them into paper lawn bags or cardboard boxes for storage until we can process them. We found that if you put them in buckets they don't "breathe," and get moldy. Once the walnut husks are no longer green, and have turned to a more yellowish-brown color, they are ready for hulling (removal of the husks).

For this part of the process, you will want to get some really good rubber gloves because they are messy; don't wear anything you care about too much. You'll also want an empty cardboard box or paper grocery bag and a bucket (food-safe, if you can). At this stage, the hull should peel right off. If it doesn't come off easily, simply set it aside and wait a few days for it to finish ripening. As you work, place the peel into the bucket and the hulled nut into the bag or box. Both parts of the nut have a purpose. Obviously, the nut is the forageable food, but that messy husk has a host of uses. It can be used to make tea, tinctures, natural dye for fibers, and black walnut ink, which is my favorite way to use them. (My black walnut ink recipe can be found in the Wild Crafting Article on page XX.)

Once you've hulled your walnuts, there are a few ways you can preserve them. One is to keep them whole until you are ready to use them. You would just give

them a quick rinse to get any remaining *black ink* off them, and let them dry in a cool, dark place with good air circulation for a day or two. When I use this method, I store them in old onion bags for ventilation. Another way is to crack them and store their meat in the fridge or freezer. No matter which method you choose, eventually you'll need to extract the nut from the shell. There are a host of contraptions out there to do this for you, but our favorite pastime is the cloth and hammer method. Gather a bowl, another bucket, a clean cloth or towel (the cloth is just to keep the shells from flying all over the place), a good hammer (we use ball peen hammers for this) and a heavy-duty working surface (the garage floor works just fine as well). Lay your cloth out on the surface, place a nut on the cloth (pointy side down, if you can), fold the cloth over the nut, and give it a whack with the hammer. This part takes a bit of practice, since you don't want to smash it to bits, but you do want to crack it sufficiently. Ideally, the shell will split into 2-3 pieces that you can then remove the meat from the shell with a nut pick, placing the nut in the bowl and the shell in the bucket. The shelled nuts can be stored in the refrigerator for about a year, or you can freeze them.

Disclaimer: Don't try to compost any part of this process, as the juglone will "poison" your compost and kill any nightshade you plant in it. Either dispose of it through yard waste or put it back out under the trees.



Michigan has seven native wild roses that can be found on pathways, in the forests, and along riverbeds. They are produced after the rose has finished blooming and are ready for harvest when they are a bright red.

Rose Hips

Rose Hips, or *Rosa canina,* are the fruit of the rose plant. Cultivated roses produce them, but wild roses also create this delicacy. Michigan has seven native wild roses that can be found on pathways, in the forests, and along riverbeds. They are produced after the rose has finished blooming and are ready for harvest when they are a bright red. If left on the plant, they persist through the winter and offer sustenance to the bird and animal populations in the area. These fruits are highly prized, since they are high in Vitamin C and can be used in everything from simple teas to health and beauty products.

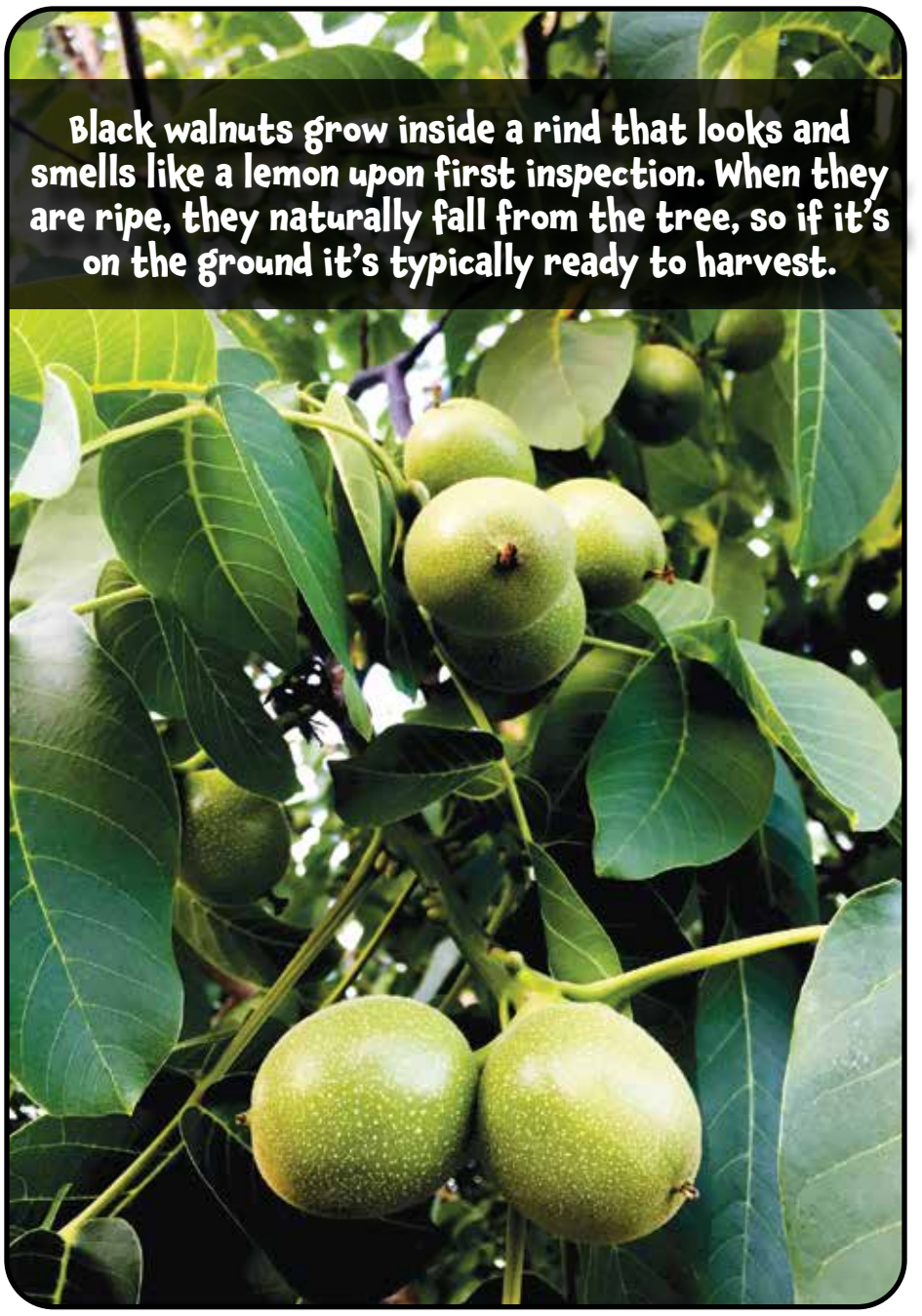
The best way to make sure you are harvesting wild rose hips, is to identify the plant in the summer when the flowers are in bloom. Their growth pattern is much like a wild black raspberry with long, thorny stems that grow in an arch with leaves that are small, lobed, and mirrored. The thorns, plus the presence of the red rose hips, are another way to identify them if you happen upon them in autumn. Luckily, there aren't any poisonous "look-alikes," so this is another great first-time forage activity for beginners.

In the case of rose hips, the longer you let them stay on the plant, the sweeter they will become. So, waiting, in this instance, is a good thing. I find that the rose hips that are just getting wrinkly when I harvest them are the tastiest.

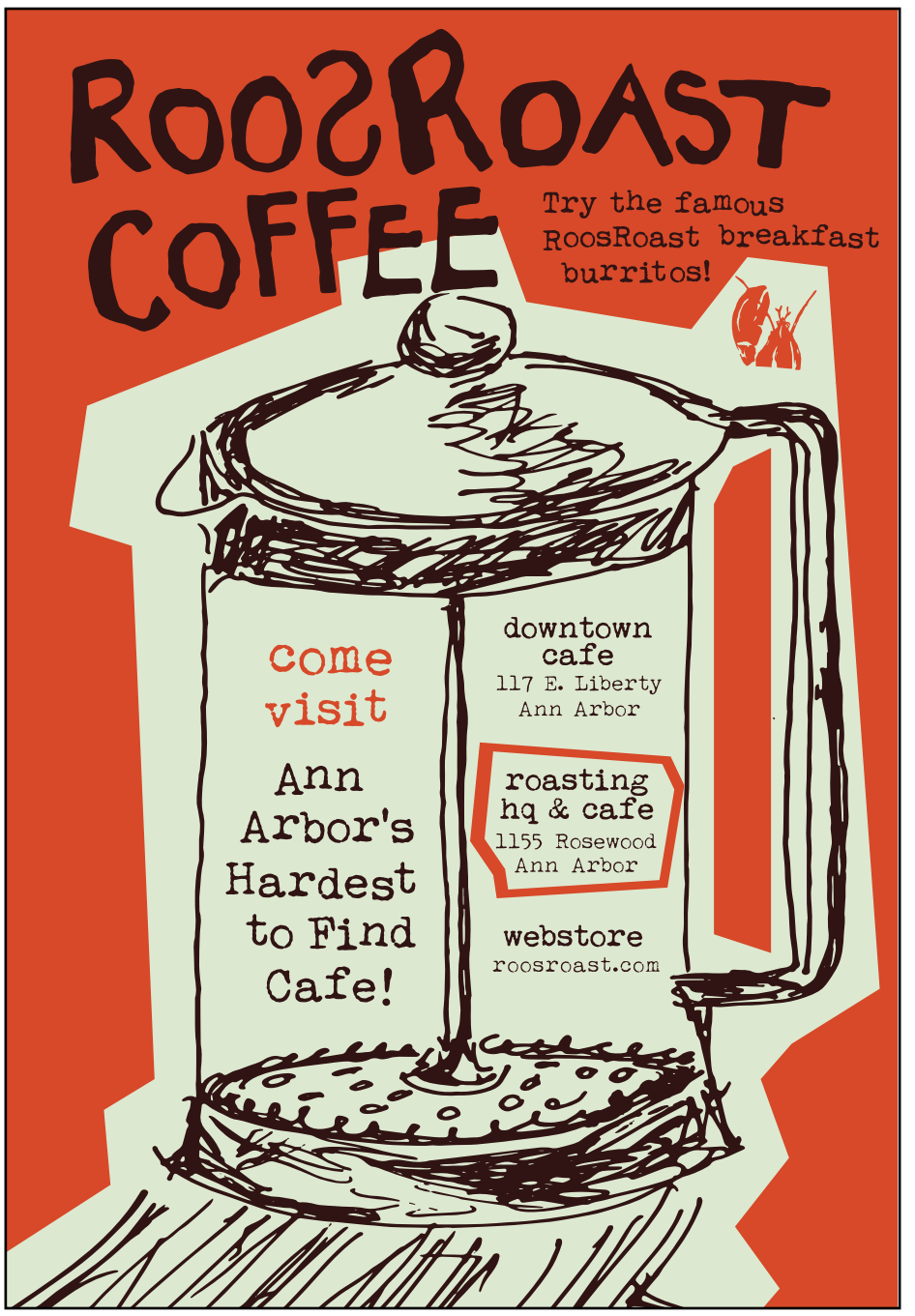
After you harvest and wash your rosehips, being sure to remove any stems, the best ways to preserve them whole are drying or dehydrating and freezing. I tend to dehydrate about a half-pint of them to keep for teas until harvest season the next year. Then, I use the rest to make infused oils for body products and cooking. I've also made rose hip jelly in exceptionally productive years. The versatility of this forageable is vast, so I encourage you to do a search on your own and see what sounds fun and interesting to you! Your local library is another wonderful resource for this as well. Some of my favorite ideas have come out of old flower cookbooks.

No matter what you decide, I hope these suggestions at least spark a desire in you to get outside, connect to the world around you, and enjoy the magic of nature.

Karen Quinn is a writer and artist who homesteads on a rural urban farm in Livonia,Michigan with her husband, son, and menagerie of animals. Her favorite things are napping, exploring, and drinking tea.



Black walnuts grow inside a rind that looks and smells like a lemon upon first inspection. When they are ripe, they naturally fall from the tree, so if it's on the ground it's typically ready to harvest.



Cooking with Lisa

By Lisa Viger-Gotte

Vegetable Chili with Chocolate

Did you know that a bit of cacao powder, or even a bar of dark chocolate, can enhance your favorite chili recipe? It adds a rich, complex depth by enhancing the savory and spicy flavors with a subtle, earthy bitterness. Cacao's slight bitterness balances the chili's spiciness and acidity, creating a harmonious blend of flavors that is just delicious.

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Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bell pepper (any color), diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 1 zucchini, diced
- 1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 oz) kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 oz) corn kernels, drained
- 1 can (28 oz) diced tomatoes
- 2 Tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 2 Tablespoons chili powder
- 1 Tablespoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 Tablespoons cacao powder (or 2 oz dark chocolate)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Juice of 1 lime
- Plant-based shredded cheese and fresh cilantro for garnish

Instructions:

1. Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic, cooking until softened, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the bell pepper, carrots, and celery, and cook for another 5 minutes until the vegetables begin to soften.
3. Stir in the zucchini and cook for 3 more minutes.
4. Add the black beans, kidney beans, corn, diced tomatoes, and tomato paste. Stir to combine.
5. Pour in the vegetable broth and bring the mixture to a simmer.
6. Add the chili powder, cumin, smoked paprika, oregano, cinnamon, and cacao powder. Stir well to incorporate the spices.
7. Season with salt and pepper to taste.Let the chili simmer for 20-30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
8. Add the lime juice and stir to combine.
9. Serve hot, garnished with plant-based shredded cheese, if desired, and some fresh cilantro.

I hope you enjoy the chocolate-enhanced chili!

Chocolate Sweet Potato Brownies

Sweet potatoes are fantastic in chocolate brownies! They add a lot of natural sweetness so some of the added sugar can be left out. Their subtle flavor blends exceptionally well with chocolate, enhancing its depth without overpowering it. This recipe is for some healthy, yet delicious, chocolate brownies. They have a slightly softer texture compared to regular brownies, and they're every bit as tasty!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup mashed sweet potato (from one large, cooked sweet potato)
- 1/2 cup almond butter (or any nut/seed butter)
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/4 cup coconut sugar (or brown sugar)
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cacao powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne (optional!)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup almond flour
- 1/4 cup dairy-free chocolate chips (optional)

Instructions:

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F and line a square baking pan (8x8 inches) with parchment paper.
2. Cook the sweet potato: Peel and cut the sweet potato into chunks. Steam or boil until tender (about 10-15 minutes). Mash the sweet potato until smooth.
3. Combine wet ingredients: In a large bowl, mix the mashed sweet potato, almond butter, maple syrup, coconut sugar, and vanilla extract until well combined.
4. Add dry ingredients: Stir in the cacao powder, baking powder, cayenne (if desired), and salt. Mix until smooth.
5. Fold in the almond flour and mix until fully incorporated. Fold in the dairy-free chocolate chips.
6. Pour the batter into the prepared baking pan and spread it evenly.
7. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
8. Let the brownies cool completely in the pan before cutting into squares.

Enjoy these healthy, sweet, chocolate treats!

Tea Time with Peggy

Orange You Glad It's Teatime?

By Peggy A. Alaniz

Last year for Christmas I got a surprise—orange tea. It was a gift from one of my relatives who always tries to find a unique tea for me to try. While I have added citrus to traditional tea, I never had one that was all citrus. It had a pleasant refreshing taste—one that I could pair with a cinnamon stick to give a little bit of warmth and holiday feel in the cold of winter. The whole house smells amazing when you brew orange peel with cinnamon on top of the stove. It made me realize that I can make a type of tisane (an herbal infusion) out of just about anything that will infuse into water.

Orange tea is a tisane. It is made from the peel of either a fresh or dried orange. It not only tastes good, but it is also good for you and easy to make. It will help to boost your immune system and improve respiratory function which is helpful during cold and flu season. The tea is also high in potassium and will help to not only lower your blood pressure but calm your anxiety. Orange tea contains collagen, so it will help the skin maintain its elasticity and not dry out—helpful for our long, dry Michigan winters. It helps to improve digestion, which during the holidays when we are eating all those rich traditional foods, can be helpful.

The tisane is relatively easy to make. You can also experiment with the flavor by adding a variety of orange peels, spices, or traditional teas. Because it is a tisane, orange tea contains no caffeine unless you add either black, green, or white tea with it. To make your own orange tea you can use fresh or dried orange peels. I suggest ½ of an orange peeled per cup of water. Place the peels and water in the pot. At this time, add any spices such as cinnamon, clover, or ginger as well. Bring the mixture to a boil. Once boiling, reduce heat and simmer for a minimum of ten minutes. You can let it steep longer depending upon how strong you would like the flavor. If you would like to add traditional tea to the mixture add loose-leaf tea or a tea bag once you remove the tisane from the heat and let it steep for up to five minutes prior to straining.

This particular tea goes well with spiced rum. It also can be made in a crock pot, as long as you keep the tea and spices like clove and ginger in a bag. It is great for a fall weekend or holiday gathering.

Crock Pot Cranberry Orange Tea:

- 5 to 10 cups of water
- The clean peels of 3 to 5 oranges
- 1 cup of cranberries
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 3-star anise
- Up to 10 whole cloves
- 3 teaspoons of fresh ginger
- 5 to 10 black tea bags

Place 5 to 10 cups of water in the crock pot. Add the washed and dried orange peel along with the cranberries. Add the cinnamon sticks and star anise. In a tea infuser place the ginger and whole cloves. Add the tea bags. Cook on high for one hour then cook on low for one to two more hours. With a ladle, scoop the hot liquid into a cup. Optionally add a shot of spiced rum to the mixture.

Peggy A. Alaniz is a tea enthusiast with a MFA in writing from Naropa University in Boulder, CO. She not only writes for The Crazy Wisdom Journal *but has also been published by Chicken Soup for The Soul in* My Wacky Wonderful Family *and has her own blog, "Tea, Travel & Spirits."*

Open Your Heart to Cacao: Healing Through Ceremony

By Lisa Viger-Gotte

"This is the heart medicine that the world needs," said Lindsey Glasson, founder, and protector of cacao at i.e. Kawa, as well as a facilitator of cacao ceremonies in Michigan and in places around the world. An intuition-led purchase of twenty pounds of cacao at a Costa Rican farmers' market just before the pandemic inspired Lindsey's journey that has helped her heal herself and others through cacao and ceremony. Cacao, she said, "is the doorway of the soul."

A cacao ceremony can be a profound heart-opening ritual. A gathering of friends sipping rich, sacred cacao while weaving community may create connection with each other and with self. It can be a shared journey of love, meditation, and spiritual togetherness.

Cacao originates from the tropical regions of Central and South America. The cacao tree, Theobroma cacao, produces large pods containing seeds which are fermented, dried, roasted, and processed to create chocolate products enjoyed worldwide. They're primarily found in warm climates like Costa Rica, Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, and the Ivory Coast.

In ancient Mesoamerica, Mayans and Aztecs revered cacao as divine. They brewed it into a potent elixir for spiritual rituals and celebrations. This sacred drink wasn't just a chocolate dessert: it was a gateway to connecting with the cosmos, fostering community, and honoring their gods.

Once reserved for ancient rituals, cacao ceremonies have found a new home in modern wellness circles. Today, they're cherished for promoting mindfulness and spiritual connection. These gatherings offer a serene escape, inviting participants to savor the present moment and nourish their souls. It's a beautiful fusion of tradition and contemporary wellness, uniting ancient wisdom with modern needs. Glasson said, "We can come back to more love and gratitude and compassion … and we can live from a place of heart. We can have peace."

Ceremonial cacao, sourced ethically, undergoes a traditional preparation method rooted in respect for the sacred bean. Cacao paste is transformed into a ceremonial elixir, often infused with spices like cinnamon, cardamom, and chili, preserving the ancient tradition while honoring the earth and its bounty.

Creating a private cacao ceremony for oneself is a beautiful way to connect with the sacred spirit of cacao and nurture self-reflection. Begin by setting a sacred space perhaps with candles or incense. Brew a cup of ceremonial-grade cacao focusing on intention and gratitude. Sit quietly, sip slowly, and allow yourself to be present, journaling or meditating as desired. Take this time to honor yourself and your journey.

In a group cacao ceremony, participants gather in a sacred space and are often seated in a circle. A facilitator guides the ceremony by leading everyone through intention setting, sharing gratitude, and sometimes incorporating meditation, breathwork, or chanting. Each person is served a cup of ceremonial-grade cacao to sip slowly. The ceremony concludes with reflection and sharing, creating a sense of community and healing.

"Sacred cacao offers a profoundly calming experience, both internally and for the collective," said Nonni Colbourne, of Mamma Mantra Healing Arts. "It is a heart opener and offers us an opportunity to process, integrate, and expand whatever is moving for us. This could be a transition through fear, discomfort, or anxiety, an opening to clarity and understanding, or a supercharged epiphany that helps to propel us forward in life."

During ceremony, a mindful approach enhances the cacao's effects promoting emotional healing, self-awareness, and a sense of community. By staying present and open, participants can experience profound insights, increased clarity, and a greater sense of peace and interconnectedness.

Incorporating gentle movement, such as yoga, into a cacao ceremony can enhance the experience by harmonizing the body and mind. The combination of cacao's plant medicine and the physical motion creates a powerful synergy that deepens the ceremony's impact. It amplifies the body's natural energy flow, promoting a sense of balance and harmony. The physical movements help to ground the experience, making it easier to process any emotional insights that arise. Additionally, incorporating breathwork within the yoga practice can further deepen relaxation and presence enhancing the overall meditative quality of the ceremony.

To find a cacao ceremony near you, search online for local wellness centers, yoga studios, or spiritual communities that host such events. Websites like Meetup, Eventbrite, and social media platforms often list upcoming ceremonies. You can also join online forums or groups dedicated to holistic practices to get recommendations and connect with facilitators. Finding a cacao community can be as easy as looking around your town. Nicole Leffler of Alchemy Holistic Collective in Chelsea says cacao ceremonies are becoming easy to find in most cities and even in small-town locales.

Sitting with cacao, with ourselves, and each other can help us remember what is truly important. "You know," Glasson says while sitting in her garden with the song of birds and her new daughter happily burbling in the background, "We get distracted by all the things—the shiny things, the cars, the fancy homes—all of these things created to distract us from the true beauty of life and the beauty of every day."

Finding the beauty of every day through cacao ceremony and ritual involves embracing mindfulness and presence. Participating in regular cacao ceremonies can cultivate a deeper connection to yourself and the world around you. The heart-opening properties of cacao, combined with intentional rituals, enhances the simple moments, fosters gratitude, and promotes emotional well-being. These practices encourage you to slow down, reflect, and savor the richness of daily life turning ordinary experiences into profound and meaningful ones.

Creating a sacred ritual at home is simple and can be powerful. Prepare the sacred cacao with mindfulness and intention. Blend ¼ cup of ceremonial-grade cacao powder or cacao paste with one cup of hot water or plant milk. Add a couple of teaspoons of sweetener (maple syrup or agave), a pinch of cayenne, some cardamom, and/or a dash of cinnamon and turmeric. Mix until smooth, set your intention, and enjoy mindfully.

Farm manager, Zach Goodman

Slow Farm

Growing Healthy Food and Justice in the Food System

By Sandor Slomovits • Photos Provided by Kim Bayer

Sometime last year I happened to catch a radio interview on Michigan Public's Stateside show. The show's host, April Baer, was speaking with Warda Bougettaya, the owner of a pastry shop in Detroit called Warda Patisserie. Warda mentioned that she buys her strawberries from Slow Farm in Ann Arbor, and she spoke very highly of those strawberries. Actually, that's a vast understatement: raved is more accurate. I was intrigued. I wanted to meet the people and see the farm where people grow such praiseworthy strawberries. So, earlier this year I emailed Slow Farm and asked if I could come visit. Owner Kim Bayer replied quickly and warmly.

In late April, on a mostly sunny, cool morning, with the temperature in the low fifties, I drove out from Ann Arbor on Whitmore Lake Road to Slow Farm. I found Bayer and co-farm manager Magda Nawrocka-Weekes standing at the edge of a large field on the west side of Whitmore Lake Road, near the farm's gate. After we exchanged greetings, Bayer said, "This was a raspberry field, and it's got a cover crop on it now. Magda and I were just talking about what we're planning to do here this summer. We're going to put some flowers at the front and then have a Three Sisters Garden." (Three Sisters Gardens are a legacy of Native American agricultural traditions. When planted together, the Three Sisters (corn, beans, and squash) help each other thrive.)

"We're also getting some blueberry bushes to put in the middle and chickens at the end." I asked if they'd include eggs in their U-Pick offerings. "We're just going to try having a little flock of chickens and see if they survive out here," replied Kim. "Kind of a way of seeing if we should think about having a larger flock. Who doesn't want U-pick eggs?" she added with a laugh.

Then Bayer and Nawrocka-Weekes led me on a tour. "This, the smallest part of the farm, about 15 acres, is where we do most of our work," Bayer said. Pointing east she added, "The overall farm is about 187 acres. I also own across the road and across the freeway. The part across the freeway we don't farm. I've put in a restored native prairie and restored about seven wetlands over there. There's also a twenty-acre woods. That's kind of its own little nature preserve. We do some cultivation across the road. We've got several acres of strawberries, and we usually have had a squash and pumpkin field there. We're planning on doing both of those this year, but here is where we do most of the intensive kind of planting and harvesting. This most southerly field is a two or three-acre asparagus field."

I wanted to meet the people and see the farm where people grow such praiseworthy strawberries. So, earlier this year I emailed Slow Farm and asked if I could come visit.

Then, turning and pointing north to a nearby row of small, tentlike structures, Bayer continued: "And this is where we've got most of our little village of shacks." The first one, she explained, is the farmstand tent which includes a self-serve fridge where people can buy the farm's fresh produce, pick up their weekly CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) portions, and weigh and pay for their U-Pick fruits and veggies. Stacked behind it are a couple of other tentlike structures, filled with tools and farming equipment. There are also two insulated sheds which serve as coolers for produce and seeds.

Slow Farm

"We don't have any permanent buildings. We've been working out of these temporary structures for the past eight years. (Bayer bought the property in 2015 and started farming it in 2017.) We've been working with the township on getting a permanent building because this way we have to wash our bins and whatever we need to clean outside, bent over with a hose. That's not something that we can do year-round. It'd be really nice to have a permanent facility. That would help our staff a lot."

"What's the holdup?" I asked. "What are the concerns about a permanent structure?"

"This property has an agricultural easement on it," replied Bayer. "That means that it has to be preserved for farming in perpetuity. The easement says that I can build any agricultural buildings up to 2% of the overall property, which would be four acres worth of impermeable building surface. I'm not asking the township to build four acres worth of buildings. I have proposed to invest in one fairly small building to be able to run my farm business in an effective and year-round way. The easement language allows for much more than the building that I'm asking for, but it has been very difficult working with the township to get even that.

The difficulty is partly because the easement language, put in place by the previous owners, was written expressly *for* conventional commodity farms which centralize their large operations, and it does not take into account smaller, diversified, and community-engaged farms like mine. Because I would like to have basic amenities, like a fully equipped staff bathroom and a small retail space, I have to go through a more complex process than I would if I were just putting up a pole barn. I'm not the only organic farmer in the area struggling under this situation and the way the township has chosen to interpret and enforce the easement language. "I've had to go through a lot to try to get them to the point of allowing this. And I'm still in the middle of it."

I have proposed to invest in one fairly small building to be able to run my farm business in an effective and year-round way. The easement language allows for much more than the building that I'm asking for, but it has been very difficult working with the township to get even that.

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I interrupted to suggest that we didn't have to mention any of this in this article. "I don't want to make your life more difficult by putting something out that people can get mad at you for."

Bayer replied, "I appreciate that. And I don't want that either, but I do want people to know that it's happening. The building that I proposed would take all these shacks and put them under one roof and give us really beautiful [possibilities] like coolers, and storage space, and a nice big inside wash pack that we could use all year. Plus, a little retail space at the front that would replace this situation. I think the township would like it, and it would be so much better for the staff working here too."

We began walking again, and Bayer showed me their three high tunnels—passive, solar-heated hoop houses—where they start and grow plants. Then, pointing to a large field she said, "Here we've got nine no-till blocks." Seeing my puzzled look, she continued. "No-till is a sustainable farming technique: you don't use a tractor to till up the ground. By not using a tractor you preserve the structure and some of the microbial networks of the soil. Each of these blocks is a hundred by a hundred feet. They each have twenty 100-foot-long beds that we plant into. We put down 30-inch-wide strips of compost and 30-inch-wide strips of wood chips for the whole hundred feet.

In each block we plant a family of plants. In this block, we'll have a lot of our roots. In the block over here, we've got our herbs and flowers including some perennials. You can see the peonies are coming up. [There's] Shasta daisies, thyme, sage, and daffodils. Here are French breakfast radishes, pink beauty radishes, and hacker eye turnips—a Japanese variety. We're getting ready to plant a lot more things. In the back is our bigger field where we'll plant our winter squash and pumpkins. Magda's in charge. She and our other farm manager, Zach, have helped develop an intensive crop plan figuring out what we're going to plant, when we're going to plant it, and how we're going to do successions."

Nawrocka-Weekes picked up the thread. "Successions, meaning rotating, multiple plantings per year. So, these four beds here are radishes and turnips. They're next going to be beans, and after that they're going to be cabbage. It's fitting all that into one year in four beds."

Bayer continued, "It's a very complex, logistical challenge. I think that might be something that most people who just do home gardening might not recognize. A diversified farm is a very complex organism."

I noted the black tarps covering many of the rows. "Most of these blocks we use at least some tarps on," Bayer said. "Tarps are a way of setting back the weeds, and it also helps the microbes and worms do their work underground.

It helps warm the soil in the springtime, which means you can plant maybe a little bit earlier. That is one of the techniques that we use to avoid having to use herbicides and pesticides and to not have to do as much weeding, although we do plenty of weeding." (Laughter)

I asked about the woods bordering the west side of the property. "Actually, we were just looking at this fence row earlier today," Bayer said. "When I bought the property, it was pretty much just filled with buckthorn, box elder, and honeysuckle, which are all invasive and very, very difficult to get rid of. We've been working over the past two years at clearing them out, and we're just starting to get to the point where we can see and walk through the whole thing. Glen is out there right now with a brush hog." (Glen Greenlee is Kim's partner and the farm's comptroller.)

"We've planted a line of nut trees, chestnuts, walnuts, and hazelnuts. These trees are eight or nine years old. They've started to make a few chestnuts. Nut trees take a long time. The overall farm is an organism. A lot of the things that we do are all part of putting a system into place. There's a huge open field, hundreds and hundreds of acres of corn and soybeans in back of us. So, the wind just whips through, and it's important for us to have a windbreak."

"Wind is just not great for a farm," added Nawrocka-Weekes. "The wind even interferes with us putting down tarps."

The overall farm is an organism. A lot of the things that we do are all part of putting a system into place.

–Kim Bayer

"We've had a lot of extreme wind events," Bayer continued. "Other people have had their buildings blown over and their high tunnels blown down. Wind isn't good for plants. It's not good for the tunnels, and so that's one of the long-term strategies that we're using, to grow our own windbreak of useful non-invasive trees. It's part of developing this overall organism. With Magda and Zach here, we've been able to do a lot more in terms of developing our crop plan and our overall thinking of the whole farm instead of just one bed at a time."

I asked Nawrocka-Weekes, who uses they/them pronouns, about their background. "I read in your bio that you studied biochemistry, and that Zach has engineering experience. Those aren't typical preparatory training for farming."

"No," They replied. "Zach and I both separately quit our jobs mid-pandemic because we realized that we didn't want to work behind desks anymore. Zach had been in the automotive industry for five or six years. I was working in Mexico as the sales and marketing manager for a UK-based startup that fabricated coral reefs by building up limestone rock around steel reef shapes using wave-energy technology. (The reefs were designed to prevent coastal erosion worsened by climate change.) Zach and I were working behind desks, stuck alone. We quit our jobs and moved to Colorado. That's where we met. But, I think the skills that we had before are very helpful for this. Biochemistry is very useful for soil balancing and other things you have to know. And Zach's amazing at systems, spreadsheets… We both love spreadsheets. There's a lot of spreadsheets at the farm—a lot of Excel.

We'd been working on farms before this, one in Colorado and one in Virginia. We moved here to have a sort of training wheels of a farm. To manage, but also to have support while we do it. Next year, we're hoping to start our own farm in the UK."

"That was going to be my next question," I said. "Yours is not a Colorado accent I'm hearing."

"No, it is not," Nawrocka-Weekes laughed. "I'm from London."

"What brought you to the States?"

"My dad is from Rhode Island, so I was allowed in the country during Covid, and now I've stayed because I'm met a nice man, and I've got a good job."

"Where do you hope to start another farm?"

"In the south of England, hopefully the Cornwall, Dorsett area. There's a land match plan that pairs young farmers who have no land with old farmers who have land. We're writing a business plan for that while we also do this. All we think about ever is farming."

I turned back to Bayer. "What's your plan for when they leave?"

"What I would like is to have an assistant manager who's training under them, who can take over as manager next year. It's been kind of hard to find that

Slow Farm continued...

person. We've interviewed several people who haven't worked out, but I think that training new farmers is an important aspect of having a farm. That's something that I hope all the folks get out of the experience of working here. It's a lot of hard physical labor, but I think people get passionate about it when they understand the systems that are involved and the vision behind it. We have a lot of volunteers who come out because they want to be a part of that as well.

We walked inside one of the high tunnels and Nawrocka-Weekes described the lush greens growing in rows and also the plants in trays on tables. "We have mostly Asian greens, a little bit of lettuce, turnips, and radishes. Right now, we are starting a lot of our own tomatoes, but we also get some starts from another local farm that has more greenhouse space. We will be planting tomatoes in here in the next two or three weeks. All of this [the greens] will come out, and this will be full of tomatoes for the whole season. We're trying to leverage the only warm space we have right now, so you can see all of the seedlings that we have started. We grow a lot of heirlooms—a lot of things from the Slow Food Ark of Taste."

Slow Farm owner, Kim Bayer, and Glen Greenlee, the farm's comptroller.

Even though Bayer, now 60, has only been farming since 2017, her involvement with different aspects of food production and community building goes back many years.

Bayer explained, "It's a directory, a catalog, of the world's most endangered and most delicious foods."

"Things that deserve to have a future," Nawrocka-Weekes continued. "Even if they're a little harder to cultivate. We've also gotten very into saving our own seeds. The German pink tomatoes here are from seeds from last year, and those are our most beautiful right now. We save the seeds of the best plants, plant them again next year and try to improve them. We're growing a lot of distinct or interesting cultivars—lots of things that people might not be able to find anywhere else."

Pointing to the rows of plants, Nawrocka-Weekes went on, "Many of these plants are ready to go in the ground, but we are going to have one more frost tonight, so we can't plant them until tomorrow. I mean, we could, but they're babies. We don't want to shove them out in the cold. We're going to be planting twelve rows of our long season crops tomorrow."

I asked if they're finding that they're planting some things earlier because of the changing climate.

"We're trying not to plant too early," Bayer said. "Last year we had a hard frost on May 27th which is almost two weeks after what's supposed to be the last frost date. What we've noticed is more extremes in the weather. It gets hotter sooner, but there are freezes later. There are major wind events. We had a six-week drought last year that meant we didn't have any strawberries or winter squash. Those kinds of extremes are something that make farming even more challenging."

I asked about the other high tunnels.

"One is a Caesar's palace," said Nawrocka-Weekes with a smile. "That's the Caesar salad house—full of salad stuff. The other is the pickle house which is full of cucumbers. Right now, they're in arugula and spinach, because we were growing them early in the season, but those will be cleaned out in the next couple of weeks, and then lettuces and cucumbers planted. We have a whole plan."

Bayer picked up a three-ring binder from a nearby table and opened it to show me a page. "This is a visualization of the crop plan. Each of those blocks out there has a page."

"And this is the nice, pretty version that is readable for everyone," Nawrocka-Weekes said. "Whereas we have ones much more in-depth with thousands of entries like seeding greenhouse date, predicted harvest, several spreadsheets all feeding into each other that actually makes this nice visualization."

"It's very important to keep track," Bayer said. "What worked and what didn't work from year to year."

Even though Bayer, now 60, has only been farming since 2017, her involvement with different aspects of food production and community building goes back many years. (To learn more about Bayer's work, I recommend Rochel Urist's fine profile in the January,April 2016 issue of *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*.) When we talked in April, she briefly summarized her career in her typical modest and self-effacing way.

"I don't have a farming background. My grandparents grew up in farming families, but that was as close as I got. My background is in information and library science. I worked at U of M for a long time and, I think kind of similarly to Magda and Zach, I felt like the academic industrial complex was crushing my soul a bit."

"Okay!" I said, "Be honest now, don't hold back!" (Laughter)

"I had also been working in food system nonprofits at the same time I was at the university. I also quit my job and decided to focus more on the food system aspect. I did a lot of community organizing around food and did food writing for a while. I was one of the people that started our Local Food Summit and our HomeGrown Festival that happened for a long time before Covid. And I helped start the Washtenaw Food Hub. I have been part of the slow food movement for a long time. I felt like that was a better match for my values. I think a lot of people come to the farm for that reason.

"But," she continued, "It's not the usual kind of background that people have or should have when they start a farm. Most people don't start a farm when they're in their fifties. They should do what Magda and Zach have done and get some experience at other farms first and learn what they're doing and how to do it."

"The pandemic clearly had a significant effect on your lives," I said, "But the farm also had to have been impacted."

"I wouldn't say that it was a good thing for us," Bayer replied, "But I think the farm helped us get through the pandemic in ways that other occupations might not have. It was a safer place to be because we were always outside. For two years we were outside wearing masks! [Laughter] It was one of the few places where people felt like they could come with their families. It was an opportunity to work together with other farms to have an online farmer's market that we did collaboratively. People came and drove through, and we put their groceries in the trunk of their car. There was a lot of adaptability developed. I don't think we've gotten over the trauma of it yet. That's definitely still in the background, but it feels a little bit in the rear-view mirror. It changed some things. I think it made people a lot more aware of their local food system."

I think the farm helped us get through the pandemic in ways that other occupations might not have. It was a safer place to be because we were always outside.

–Kim Bayer

I wanted to experience the U-Pick aspect of Slow Farm; so, a few days after my first visit, I visited the farm again. On my earlier visit Bayer had said, "We're going into our eighth season of doing U-Pick. It's not very common to have U-pick vegetables…especially the kinds that we grow."

"It's great showing people stuff," Nawrocka-Weekes added, "But you've got to keep an eye on people harvesting who are maybe looking completely lost."

I thought that might be an accurate description of me harvesting vegetables. Most of my previous experience with harvesting has been from grocery shelves.

I arrived at about nine on a beautiful Saturday morning in May and at the farmstand tent told Alex Solum, one of Slow Farm's newest employees, that I'd come to harvest asparagus. (Bayer had mentioned that her friend, Warda Bougettaya , who had raved about Slow Farm's strawberries, calls their asparagus "Gucci asparagus.") Alex asked if I had ever harvested asparagus. When I said no, she handed me a large white bucket, showed me the asparagus field, and cautioned me to walk only in the rows and not across them. Then she instructed me to simply snap off asparagus stalks close to the ground and to only pick spears that were at least as long as her hand, showing the distance from her wrist to her fingertips. Finally, she pointed to an orange cone in the middle of the field and asked me to avoid that area as there was a killdeer's nest on the ground.

There were a handful of people already in the field, including families with young children. I felt like I was on a treasure hunt, finding asparagus spears between the weeds, and I soon had the amount I wanted. I headed back to the farmstand, where tables displayed some of the farm's spring produce for sale: spinach, bok

Farm Manager Magda Nawrocka-Weekes

We save the seeds of the best plants, plant them again next year and try to improve them. We're growing a lot of distinct or interesting cultivars—lots of things that people might not be able to find anywhere else.

– Magda Nawrocka-Weekes

The Slow Farm 2024 Crew: (L to R) Juri Jacoby, Drew Eddy, Shannon Rau, Claire Castle, Violet Flores, Mika Nagai, Farm Manager Magda Nawrocka-Weekes, and Farm Manager Zach Goodman (not pictured, Alex Solum).

Slow Farm
continued...

choy, mustard greens, green garlic, turnips, and radishes, as well as small tomato and pepper plants. Solum weighed my harvest. I paid, and before I left, I talked with Zach Goodman, the farm's co-manager and Nawrocka-Weekes partner. He gave me a short tour and concluded by saying, "I've been farming for about four years. I hope to do this for the rest of my life."

Back home, I found Bougettaya's praise of Slow Farm's "Gucci asparagus" to be, if anything, understated. For lunch, my family and I enjoyed the freshest, most delicious asparagus we've ever had. Slow Farm is, by its own description, "a biodiverse and USDA certified organic U-Pick farm and farmstand devoted to the principles of Slow Food, agroecology, and justice in the food system." I asked Bayer and Nawrocka-Weekes about the emphasis on "justice in the food system."

I thought that might be an accurate description of me harvesting vegetables. Most of my previous experience with harvesting has been from grocery shelves.

Nawrocka-Weekes began their reply with a question. "How much do you know about farm apprenticeships? People do not get paid very much to learn how to be farmers. The last two farms we were on, we made $400 to $800 a month and got room and board and education. That's not enough to make savings or live on. This place—actually paying people a living wage—is pretty uncommon."

Bayer continued, "I don't think it would make sense to try to have a sustainable farm and treat the employees like they were disposable. The thing that I really enjoy is being part of a high functioning team and feeling like we're working together on the same thing—working together on a higher purpose. I think that's part of what makes this kind of work valuable and really compelling. I feel sad for people that don't feel like that. Because having a farm, this is not something anybody can do by themselves. You have to have the expertise, the help, the effort, and the heart of lots of people. You can't wheel, hoe, broad fork, dig, and weed all day for just money. You can't pay people enough money, I don't think, to do this. They have to value it. So, having colleagues and a team that shares the same values and sense of purpose is really crucial.

I just feel like it's the right thing to do. And why would you not do the right thing if you have a choice? I want to get to the point where the farm can hire people year-round with full benefits. It's sad to me that we're not able to do that yet. I think that's the way we're going to have skilled farmers in the future, when young people see this as a viable career path. Right now, I don't think it is, and I don't think young people see it that way unless they're crazy, like Magda and Zach. [Laughter] There is a way, but it's very, very hard. And that is unfair for something as crucial as healthy food.

Learning how to farm is experiential knowledge. It's not like other kinds of things, I think. It's more like music. You can't practice for a hundred hours and be an expert violinist. You have to do it over a period of years and build up your experience. There's no shortcut. It should be motivating people a lot if we don't have enough farmers.

One thing that I was hoping for on this farm is to develop a model that could point to a better future. I think that you have to take care of the people that you work with, as well as the people that you serve, to have something that's going to last into the future."

I asked about the balance between making a farm work financially and staying true to one's values.

"That's one of the biggest challenges for farms in general, especially small, diversified farms," said Bayer. "I think when you have values like paying your staff a living wage and not spraying poisons, working toward the health of individuals as well as the community, it's a lot more expensive than not doing those things. It's strange to me that the food system that we have is so backward. One thing that we often talk about is that I pay about $1,300 a year for my organic certification for the privilege of *not* spraying poisons. And everybody who's doing conventional farming around me sprays poisons for free and gets our tax subsidies for doing it."

Nawrocka-Weekes cut in, "And they're growing stuff that isn't even for people."

"Right" said Bayer. "It's commodities for export or grain for animals, which isn't healthy for them. It's an ongoing challenge. It's another reason that I think people should have experience on a farm before owning a farm."

"I like the U-Pick community involvement element," Nawrocka-Weekes continued. "I think everyone has a right to see where their food comes from and should have some chance to get involved with it. We're going to have signs here on exactly how to pick something and when and why and where it comes from. A lot of people have never picked a carrot before. A lot of people tried their first turnip in front of us a few days ago at the CSA fair. It was great. Seeing people try vegetables for the first time, building community resilience, giving people the chance to do something—that is what really is mattering here.

We have some people who volunteer here, and they have parents back in India who own a farm. They Skype their parents and show them what we are doing here, and they compare notes, which is just amazing. The reconnection to the land that you are on, I think a lot of people are seeking that. I like having that opportunity and trying to get it to as many people as possible."

"Building on that," said Bayer, "One of the things that's important to me about this farm is that people have a direct experience of their food system when they come here. We don't go to any farmer's markets. We really want people to come here to the farm and see what a real, working, organic farm looks like, feels like, tastes like. I think a lot of people don't have that opportunity. They see pictures in the grocery store of some kind of fairytale farm. But, I want people to have that direct experience. I think when people have that they care in a different way. Even people that have been here once remember it for a long time. A lot of people who come here talk about how magical it is. That's really encouraging."

At the time of this writing the farmstand was open and staffed on Wednesday through Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Hours change as fall descends, so check the website for updated hours. Slow Farm is located at 4700 Whitmore Lake Road in Ann Arbor. Discover more online at slowfarmandfriends.com.

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Eve Wilson

Midwife for the New World

By Michelle McLemore • Photos by Hilary Nichols

Robert Jordan's fantasy novel *Wheel of Time* describes the "breaking of the world." First published in 1990, it portends a dark, de-evolution—a time of rampant chaos, evil running amuck (worse than the Sanderson sisters). And yet, spiritual communities have sung the emergence of a new positive world for many decades prior.

Certainly, in our history, heavy bonds—literal and figurative—of misunderstanding, anger, fear, pain, manipulation, and isolation have left their energetic impressions across centuries of family lines and continents; yet it is also true, that love, compassion, fortitude, and healing have been wielded by light workers, who humbly mend the woes in the background of all cultures. Dawn is roused by prayers as people greet the sun and four corners; gratitude is whispered to crops and rain for nourishment to endure drought, fire, and plagues; healers step lightly across battle fields—literal and figurative—to spread salve on burns and gashes—wounds physical and psychological—while whispering encouragement, strength, and reminders that the Divine has never left any of us alone.

Our Old World's "breaking" has brought to light untruths which kept people shackled in ideas of isolation from our Divine selves. These ideas no longer serve the health of the planet nor its place in the larger cosmos. A revised world at a higher frequency is dawning, and Eve Wilson, (aptly named) is a forrunner—a herald of new life; she is a soul contract mediator guiding others' evolution to help facilitate the new world ascension. And she believes she will see the New World within her lifetime.

At 64, this Ann Arborite lives at ease in her body, state, and station. Without pomp, she introduces herself as an intuitive spiritual healer and a World Healing and Ascension Worker. "Personal empowerment and soul evolution are the purpose of people's lives, and therefore, of my work." She tilted her head as she added, "I have a knack for perceiving what is behind challenges. That knack allows me to help people who are ready to use their opportunities to grow strong and whole."

While meeting, I observed simple, focused artwork and minimal figurines on the shelves behind her. Wall hangings featured nature elements—various trees,

leaves, and blossoms. The color palette stirred a faint memory of a "somewhere" you could walk barefoot comfortably—at ease within nature without the complicated machinations of physical society.

My gaze was drawn to ask about a particular picture of dark birds hanging over her left shoulder. She delightedly shared it was these special messengers who clarified part of her "Big Job" [purpose] here. "When my daughter was young, we were camping, and the sun was just getting ready to come up. Suddenly, I was awake and could see through the roof of my tent—as if it wasn't there at all. Clearly, I could see crows sitting on the pine trees rising high above the tent… and one spoke."

"I'm going to start cawing," it said.

Eve was surprised and, naturally, intrigued. "Okay," she replied. (For what does one say to such an accommodating crow?)

The crow started cawing, and others called back from across the distance.

"It was the first time Crow ever talked to me," Eve confided. "It continued, 'Your job is first crow—you carry the message, 'God is Here.' Then, the others will respond to it.'"

Others in this situation might feel a bit daunted: in the dark, on the literal *eve* of dawn, conversing clearly with a bird bestowing Divine assignments. Another camper might question the quality of her prior night's dinner.

Yet, in relating the story, Eve's face glowed, sweetness exuded through her being. Her short, feathered hair framed her face and twinkling eyes; earrings dangled—tinkling to earth-unfathomable music. Eve smiled. "I often initiate and then it/things start showing up."

She continued to explain, "I have the gift of working directly with the One Source. It's what I call the Essence—the Truth of God." Not to be confused with a particular religion's God figure, Wilson explained her role as "being employed by the One" full time since she was 26 years old.

The unique phrasing of employment reveals the casual, intimate, and yet simultaneously respectful relationship she abides in, and with, the One Source since a very young age.

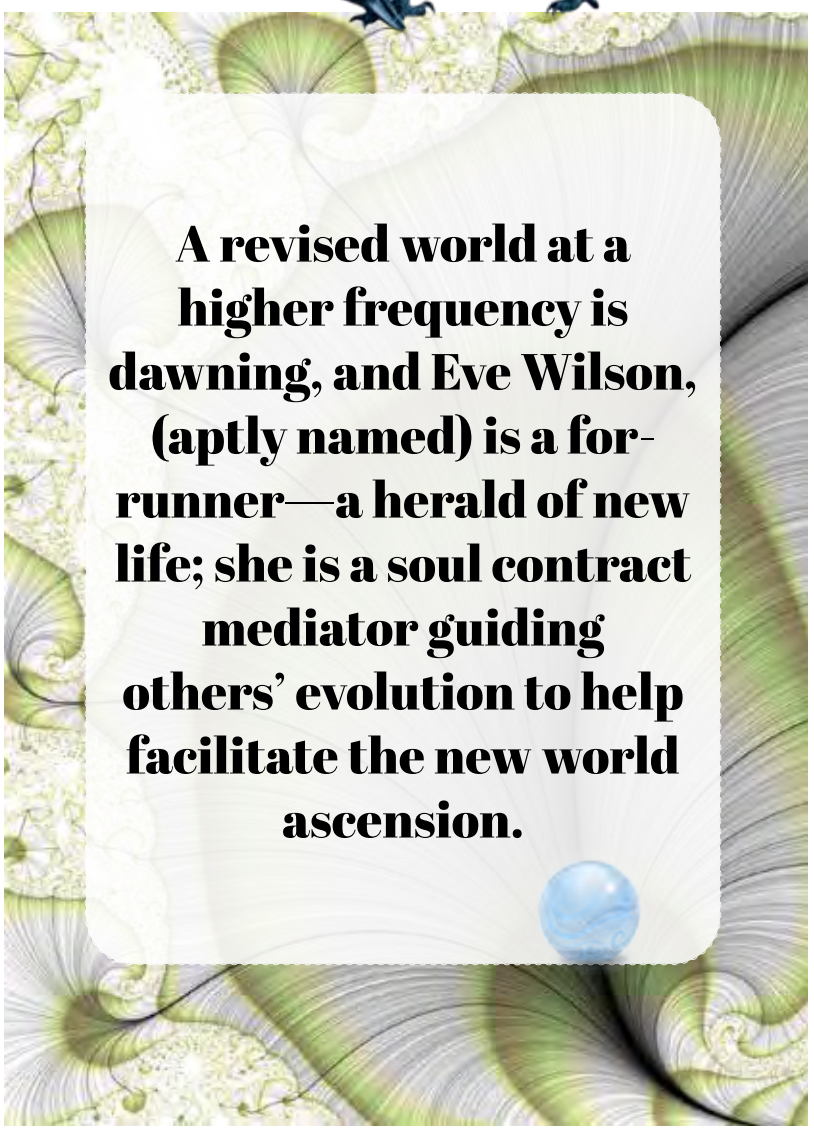
One of Wilson's earliest intuitive memories was created circa age four. A grandmother had been asked to babysit her. As the maternal-line matron entered the house, "I saw a black aura radiating from her. It was particulate like charcoal and sharp-edged." Instinct said, "Run!" and that was what she did. "I ran up to my room and pushed everything I could in front of the door. Later when the woman's voice came through the door inquiring what she was doing, Wilson told her, she was playing. With that, Grandma (who was the "angriest and scariest person" the four-year-old had yet met) left her alone. "Looking back," Wilson reflected, "I had learned to recognize seeing people's auras, then to trust to be guided by them."

For Wilson, perception of auras is not confined to people. She can also see the energy of settings and homes (though she doesn't focus on them these days). "I grew up in Beverly Hills, Michigan (between Royal Oak and Birmingham. We had a sweet half-acre yard and lots of trees. It was a lovely home, and I spent most of my time out of doors." Outside was in stark contrast to the pent-up dis-ease inside. Her home's aura? "Soupy, dirty, pea green with specks. Life was scary, stressful, and strange growing up in the family," Wilson confided. To survive she says, "I lived far outside of my body in spirit—that has always been my strong and safe place."

My gaze was drawn to ask about a particular picture of dark birds hanging over her left shoulder. She delightedly shared it was these special messengers who clarified part of her "Big Job" [purpose] here.

"My parents were Pentecostal missionaries who worked in the jail system," she shared. Wilson's mom was a strict religious adherent, influenced personally—and in her parenting style—by the swift judgement and direction of the Old Testament while believing full-hearted in the literal presentation of Jesus in the gospels. This empowered Wilson's mom to stand unyielding in thoughts and actions; it led her to hands-on healings, but also often to venting fury akin to the casting out of the merchants in the Temple square on Sabbath.

Wilson recounts evolution of survival skills despite difficulties such as having to be on constant vigil for unexpected physical and emotional attacks, unfortunately, sometimes by relatives. Today she understands it was part of their scripts—not choices by maleficent beings. Wilson recounted, "I learned from my mother not to believe things just because someone [else] believes them intensely, and [through her works] I learned that spiritual healing is possible."


A revised world at a higher frequency is dawning, and Eve Wilson, (aptly named) is a for-runner—a herald of new life; she is a soul contract mediator guiding others' evolution to help facilitate the new world ascension.

"The way I was raised taught me to be very independent and not need anything from anyone—to always follow my heart. This allowed me to find my own path yet made it hard to integrate socially. However, it ended up useful," Wilson explained. "Others grow up dependent on others; that dependency often defines or influences the direction they can go in their lives. I'm a free agent—an independent. I can go wherever God needs me."

Still, Wilson's upbeat tone didn't waver. If anything, she grew sassier and more confident. "I have had my heart broken many times—and in fairly catastrophic ways early on. But I am not a victim." Wilson sat, head up, smiling, energy unwavering. "Healing through this journey has made me strong and self-confident. It has taught me compassion for myself and others which, in turn, helped teach me to heal others. It has also taught me that everything is in my life for a purpose. I've learned to embrace that, rather than to complain or resist…much," she giggled. "Oh, and for those who knew me before. This is a good third marriage for me!" She laughed merrily.

Regarding the many challenges stated and implied, Wilson explained: "My Higher Self chose my challenges because they were the quickest way to build the strength and muscles that I needed in my human self to do my bigger work. I am reaping the benefits of that now."

Choosing our own challenges in a soul contract, like volunteering for dodgeball as the scrawniest kid pre-birth, is not a new theory; still, it is definitely not a popular one—taking responsibility and transforming self-patterns flies in the face of current common trends.

Yet, imagine: youthful, glowing spirits raising their hands excitedly in the classroom of the All Consciousness, begging to be chosen for abuse, divorce, slander, loneliness, war, or persecution. "Put me in, Coach! I can do this! I can take it for the team!"

Wilson's difficult relationship with her maternal line was tempered by a father of unconditional love. [A prime example of the energetic balance of challenge and love written into this life's framework.] She shared, "When I was around eight, my father decided to read the *Bible* to my sister and I before bed each night." She went on to describe that during those times, she could see a golden light surrounding him. "It was both healing and inspiring. It taught me about unconditional love." Though Wilson would grow to not identify with any particular religion ("due to the limitations it would impose on who she needs to be in this lifetime") parts of her father's readings resonated as Truth to the child burgeoning into a multi-world walker.

Gratitude and joy vibrated in all directions as she reminisced on "those precious evenings" with her father. I could imagine a dim room, his steady, awed voice measured in reading an often-lyrical script; the kind heart illuminated in Divine light inspiring the young, intently listening Eve.

Wilson's destiny began to take form at fifteen. "I was watching a Merv Griffin talk show about massage. It was like a switch turned on. That evening, I offered to do a massage for my very over-worked father who held so much stress in his body and only gave love on the outside. It changed his life and mine as well." Guided by intuition, she learned hand placement could provide relief, and she would go on to offer it to others professionally for nine years.

In her twenties, she additionally supported herself as a professional wedding singer, sang in coffee houses, and held a regular job at Om café. Wilson found herself playing guitar and performing her original songs at the cafe in Ferndale two nights a week. "One day I got a message direct from Essence of Truth to advertise as a healer."

Eve Wilson continued...

I was told I would know what to do when people came, and I did. I would look at their aura and see their chakras and energy flows and be guided how to teach them to go within to receive the messages their unconscious held about what was causing their troubles. Then, I would guide them to release blocks, heal themselves, and open to becoming whole and empowered in their lives and bodies.

With full faith, she put ads on her tip cups and on the bathroom wall. "I was pleased to receive tutoring by Ascended Masters and Archangels each time I worked with a client. Within six months of beginning my practice, I had a full schedule! I was new and effective, and people were really searching at that time." She recalled posting flyers all over Southeast Michigan and bartering with clients to help keep a full schedule.

Gratitude and joy vibrated in all directions as she reminisced on "those precious evenings" with her father. I could imagine a dim room, his steady, awed voice measured in reading an often-lyrical script; the kind heart illuminated in Divine light inspiring the young, intently listening Eve.

I shook my head in awe. The trust that she had in her twenties, for a healing modality that only now is making it into mainstream culture yet is still mostly ridiculed in movies and television—it was in stark contrast to the hesitancy so many energy workers feel as they test the waters of service.

Wilson brought vocal sound healing into her massage and healing sessions. "I could always hear spiritually. I'd sing dissonance into harmony, sing into the auras—transform it into something beautiful, spiritual, and healing. It was great fun."

"I spoke to groups about my work and led people in meditations–everywhere from the Theosophical Society and Holistic Nurses to the Troy Library! I did something kind for someone, and in turn, they built me a website. Later a graduate of mine took it over and keeps it up to date for me. I am extremely blessed to have someone who loves my work to do this for me."

In addition to healing and teaching, Wilson has been a prolific holistic writer through *Body Mind Spirit Guide Magazine*—16 years as a monthly columnist. She has also published a book, *Riding the Wave of Change: Hope, Healing, and Spiritual Growth for Our World*, and maintains her own blog.

In 2017, Feedspot.com highlighted her blog at spiritualhealers.com/blog as one of the "75 Best Healing Blogs on the Planet." Currently her blog ranks 13th surpassing one of her highly respected peers, Marianne Williamson. To prepare to write her blog Wilson described, "Every week I meditate on what people need to bring positive influences into our world. I give practical instructions for how to work effectively with the changes we are all undergoing."

"Big jobs involve evolving and muscle building of the individual. Often their healing ties into hereditary lines or soul groups working on the same projects." Interestingly, Wilson explained, "This includes the folks that make life hard—those who hold oppositional roles that make us deal with challenges. They are servants of the Big Job as much as those who get to swing the door."

A friend taught her about crystals and the Kaballah, and this led to teaching classes. Along the way she learned Reiki and chakra balancing as well. "Gradually I realized that I knew what was wrong with people—what was causing the issues they were requiring help for. I began counseling them

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intuitively while I worked. A year after I started my practice, people asked me to teach, and I began the Healer Development Program which ran for about 36 years."

"To make it easier for students, I developed lessons like Inner Child Work, Body Communication, Chakra Tuning and Balancing, Aura Reading, Guiding others through their own healing processes, and others."

Wilson also studied hypnotic regression in a long weekend course early on. However, she realized she didn't need to put people in trance to be effective. Thus, she only adapted the relaxation part to help "people get out of their heads and deeply into their bodies to do Body Communication and Inner Child Work." When I asked for clarification, she explained, "Body Communication is going deep into the subconscious to listen to pain and find out why it hurts there" as different parts of the body can hold memory. In Inner Child work, clients "look within to find their inner child and rework their stories to empower them. It is to weave strength [backward] through life as if the healing had always been there. It allows them to reclaim gifts" that may have been muted due to trauma or self-beliefs.

Wilson has the longevity in the healing world to have experienced Michigan before and after Western Medicine lobbyists got involved. "When people asked me to teach them to be healers, I was in a community of alternative practitioners and some of them were being taken to court for working unlawfully without a medical license." Wilson was guided to a Spiritualist Church in Royal Oak initially to safeguard her work but delightedly found additional worth there. "The head of that church became my dear friend and spiritual mother. She was ordained by UCM and sponsored me because she was very impressed with my work."

"I love UCM because they don't require anyone to embrace one specific doctrine yet seek to support people of integrity to do their authentic work." The association enabled Wilson to legally certify students as Healer Practitioners once she herself became an ordained minister in 1986. Wilson chuckled. "I sometimes think of myself as the irreverent Reverend Eve and this attitude works fine with UCM."

Amidst the narrative of Wilson's life and work, we discover healing for within and without depends upon embracing a higher, clearer perspective.

Another transition shifted Wilson from healing physical bodies to a larger need: "World Healing became more pre-eminent in my consciousness." Over the last fourteen years, people were increasingly coming to work with her that were ready to work on what she refers to as their "Big Jobs" for the world. "They are people who have come here to bring change for good into particular areas of life."

Wilson's Big Job emerged as a facilitator of world ascension. That meant narrowing her clientele to work with people who "swing open the door. Those who are the hinge pin [for the] door. They think it's [the healing] personal, but it's really about the job they came to facilitate. My job [has evolved] to facilitate the facilitators."

She went on to explain that areas requiring transmutation for the elevation of the world are usually great challenges: Hatred, fear, abuse, scarcity, judgment, bigotry, feeling bad about ourselves, grief, depression, psychological issues, jealousy… any of these could be big jobs. It can even be resistance to something necessary for success. "These challenges are like bookmarks in their story of this, and all lifetimes, guiding them to return to unity and open the way for others in their soul groups to do that also.

"Big jobs involve evolving and muscle building of the individual. Often their healing ties into hereditary lines or soul groups working on the same projects." Interestingly, Wilson explained, "This includes the folks that make life hard—those who hold oppositional roles that make us deal with challenges. They are servants of the Big Job as much as those who get to swing the door."

How does it all come together? In a healing session, "we contact them [higher selves as well as oppositional souls] so they can make the job easier—so we don't feel trapped in whatever it is."

When I asked about an example of working with a family line, Wilson recounted the situation with a five-month-old boy. The child had been diagnosed with systemic kidney disease and had short-term life expectancy.

Wilson sat on her couch and tuned in to the child. "I asked telepathically, 'why are you sick?'"

He replied, "I'm here because it's part of my job, to help my family work through things."

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Eve Wilson continued...

It doesn't get much direct than that. Each time Wilson prepared to work, she asked him, "What do you want to work on?" The child would designate a relative with an issue. At that point, his grandma (one of Wilson's students) and Wilson tuned telepathically in with the designated family member.

"We would say, 'Your grandson would like to help you overcome something. Are you willing? The answer was almost always 'yes.'"

They met and mingled with family members' Higher Selves for figurative power lunches or coffee tête-à-tête where they agreed to revisions in soul contracts enabling advancement of Big Jobs back on Earth.

She clarified, "We worked with God to find the place in the hereditary line where healing was ready to begin. We would clear traumas around connections, weaving the shifts across time, as if they had always been that way." When the child would develop a symptom—such as all valves leaking–they'd work with what was causing it. On the next doctor's visit, doctors would re-examine the boy and suddenly say, "We must have not really seen it" as the symptoms would have disappeared.

"Some challenges can make you feel like a victim: don't buy that role. You are an eternal being of unconditional love hidden within a human lifetime. Find yourself within and everything else will follow."

–Eve Wilson

The outcome? The child is currently a teenager. "He's totally normal, really smart, way ahead of growth markers. His symptoms aren't growing despite the body growing. The doctors remark, 'if we look at his current blood tests, we'd think he never had the disease.'" Let the trumpets blaze the effectiveness of ancestral line healing.

As Wilson's work transitioned, in the spring of 2022, she received the impression that the time had come to end teaching her original class. In place of it, she began training World Healing and Ascension Workers. She now focuses on Healing and Ascension Monthlies. "It makes a huge impact for World Healing to raise the vibration of the body, aura, and soul to a higher level so the enlightened self can live more fully in the world." This, in turn, raises the overall vibration of the world simultaneously. Wilson's smile broadened. "Currently I feel like a midwife, on call for the birthing and constant rebirthing of our world as it step by step ascends."

I wondered if working with higher guidance had always been immediate and easy. Without arrogance nor pride, Wilson admits, "I have always been strong in spirit and have a strong relationship with the ascended master, Jesus." Wilson described it was near the end of a dark period, when Jesus came to her while she was sitting in her meditation chair. "He put his arms on my chair and looked right into my face. I said, 'Hi. I see you, but would you go away?'"

Not one to give up, he came in again later when she was in the shower. "He had dark skin, was gorgeous with long hair. "You are nothing like my mom said," she stated humorously. She said it was at that point, she opened up to the idea of cooperation. "Okay, you're cool; we'll work on this."

An important epiphany came from working with enlightened masters. She related a life-threatening incident when someone from the dark period of her life sent an entity at her. It temporarily blocked her connection and manipulated her into driving into an intersection with oncoming traffic.

I saw the light as green. It was red. I didn't realize it until I was literally in the middle of the intersection and folks were coming at me. In the next breath, my car was a mile away. I had heard this happening to another couple–moved their car out of the way of a truck on a winding cliff road. The seed had been planted, so I knew it was possible. And then, it happened to me.

She continued, "I learned you aren't getting out of this life until it's time. I'm a 5'1", 100 lb. woman and you can't really fuck with me. I just get stronger. I had to overcome being a victim, a woman with no walls, no skin, no protection, [living in spirit] 300 feet out of my body filming my life going to elementary school [–watching it happen versus living it in my body.] Tender and fragile, yet strong underneath. And now I know that."

Amidst the narrative of Wilson's life and work, we discover healing for within and without depends upon embracing a higher, clearer perspective. "Everything in life is there to make you grow. If we think our situations and challenges are burdens or faults, we are missing the point. Some challenges can make you feel like a victim: don't buy that role. You are an eternal being of unconditional love hidden within a human lifetime. Find yourself within and everything else will follow." Wilson adamantly shares, "doing this work can help your hereditary line, soul group, and ultimately our world to heal and ascend."

"People really need to learn what they are dealing with is the work they were brought here to do–to build the soul energy. If they need help, it will show up. If help doesn't surface…they've got this."

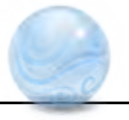
She went on: "It's like when you are pregnant, and someone tells you do Kegle exercises. You question, 'How do I even find a Kegle? What even is that muscle?' And then you find it!" (With a smirk she nearly winks saying, "That's an important muscle to find control over!) Soul muscles are like that. You're almost there, but not quite. Big hardships make you find them." Her voice dropped lower. "You *dig* in there and find them. Have a good cry, if needed, and then get to work."

"There is no greater satisfaction than knowing you have mastered your own challenges and can co-create life through unconditional love with guidance from your Higher Self. This is a joy that no one can take from you."

Maintaining a high frequency while working with struggling clients may be challenging for some. When asked to describe her self-care, Wilson shared, "I spend two hours in the morning doing personal and World Healing and Ascension Work. This has grown as I have grown to own this work as my job." I tentatively asked her recommendation for readers. "Everyone should begin each day from a place of centered owning of their inner truth. Make that a priority, then you can co-create, and everything will work out as it optimally needs to. Without that, people flounder with their own judgments and fears—and those of others—about what their life should look like. Inner Guidance is the solution to confusion!"

Wilson has a series of videos designed to help people with their daily centering. Anyone can access them for free on her website spiritualhealers.com/videogallery. They are under "The Three Most Important Things" video series.

Her ongoing hope for students, clients, and all? "That everyone will rise in vibration to release the darkness and illusions of the old world and enter unity with Inner Wisdom to become whole." Excitedly, we await the birth announcement of the new world. Wilson contends contractions are coming along nicely, and I'm sure she will be the first crow to announce the crowning achievement.



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If you are interested in taking Wilson's class, she will begin her fall Monthlies Series, Thursday, August 15 from 7:30-9:30 pm by teleconference call. Enroll for the series of six Thursday night meetings every four weeks.

To contact Eve, email evew@spiritualhealers.com or visit spiritualhealers.com/heal. You can also follow her at bodymindspiritguide.com/author/eve-wilson/, on Facebook at EveWilson.BridgeToWholeness, Twitter at healereve8, and LinkedIn.

Michelle McLemore is a freelance writer, energy practitioner, and stress management guide for schools, businesses, workshops, and one-on-one clients. Her background as an English, history, psychology, and literacy teacher support clients drawn to write-to-heal through journals, memoirs, and genealogy stories. She hosts writing retreats a few times a year. Learn more at michellemclemore.com or facebook.com/MichelleMcLemoreHealingGuide.

Leonids: WORTH A LOOK

By Frank Vandervort

"The night of your birth. Thirty-three. The Leonids they were called. God how the stars did fall."

—Blood Meridian, Cormac McCarthy

Last April's total eclipse had many of us looking to the southern sky at that rare astronomical phenomenon. The following month, some of us in Southeast Michigan were out on our porches or in our yards late at night looking in the opposite direction, hoping to get a rare glimpse of the Northern Lights. This fall, we may have another opportunity to witness a celestial display—the Leonids. Each November, the night sky lights up with a meteor shower as the earth passes close to the Tempel-Tuttle comet's orbit.

I have not always been a stargazer. One of my earliest memory fragments is from when I was about four years old. I was a croup-y kid, a condition that landed me in a hospital oxygen tent more than once. One evening, my mother, who worked late waiting tables at a Big Boy restaurant, returned home after her shift long after I'd gone to bed and roused me from sleep. I sat on the edge of the dining room table as she and my grandmother gave me cough syrup and slathered Vick's Vapor Rub on my chest. As they did, they talked about flying saucers and about someone who had been abducted. I remember feeling scared and, for many years after, looked into the night sky with fear-tinged fascination.

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Late in the summer of 1994, I was camping near the shore of Jenny Lake in Grand Teton National Park. I awoke in the middle of the night and heard coyotes yipping far off, their voices echoing through the lodgepole pines. I climbed out of my tent and walked to the lake's edge. It was cold, the sky crystalline. A gibbous moon gave off an incandescent light that shimmered on the lake's surface and threw a patchwork of shadow through the trees. I sat for a long time on a log looking into a sky that was polka dotted with an uncountable number of stars. As I did, I felt that tinge of childhood fear transform into awe.

Most years the Leonids give off a few dozen meteors per hour. Once every 33 years, the time it takes Tempel-Tuttle to circle the sun, the "shower" can become a "storm." When this happens, the comet gives off at least one thousand meteors per hour.

The storm on the night of November 12-13, 1833 is legendary. Known as "the night the sky fell," meteors streaked across the sky for nine hours, during which time it is estimated that from 50,000 to 150,000 fell each hour. That storm was, in the words of one historian, "the greatest celestial event in U.S. history."

Writing in the essay "An American Land Ethic" from his collection The Man Made of Words, the Pulitzer Prize winning Native American writer N. Scott Momaday (who passed away earlier this year) explained that the storm of '33 "is among the earliest entries in the Kiowa calendars." The tribe's oral historians described some of the meteors that fell that night nearly two centuries ago as "brighter than Venus" while "one was said to be as large as the moon." He continues, "So deeply impressed upon the imagination of the Kiowas is that old phenomenon, that it is remembered still: it has become part of the racial memory."

The Kiowa are not the only tribe to point to the 1833 meteor storm as a cultural marker. Harvard historian, and former University of Michigan Professor, Phillip Deloria, has been researching the impact of that night's display for years. He has documented how that storm was recorded on many tribes' winter counts, a kind of calendar on which significant events in a tribe's history were recorded on animal skins, and in their oral traditions—the Lakota, Blackfeet, Mandan, Pawnee of the plains, as well as Cherokee in the east. In addition to Native American histories, that night's storm was recorded in the quilt work of enslaved people in the American South. Many Christians, too, noted the celestial storm, and believed the world was coming to an end or that man was being punished for having offended God.

The day after the storm, Yale astronomy professor Denison Olmsted sent a letter to the New Haven newspaper asking people to send him information about what they had seen—an act Professor Deloria has called the first crowd sourcing of scientific information. Artists documented the phenomenon in prints and woodcuts, and drawings appeared on the front pages of the country's newspapers. That storm also lived in the memory of Carleton Watkins, then a child growing up in Oneonta, New York in the Catskill Mountains. Watkins recounted his memory of that night to a biographer seventy years later, after he had become one of the country's first and most accomplished landscape photographers—an Ansel Adams of the civil war era. It was that night when the "sky was snowing fire," he suggested, that had inspired him to a career attempting to capture nature's beauty on film.

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More recently, November 1966 produced another intense storm. On the 17th of that month, NASA documented that the comet threw off thousands of meteors per minute for about 15 minutes. Observers across the southern tier of the United States were astonished by what they saw. One of those was nine-year-old William Keel who lived in Nashville, Tennessee and described himself on a NASA website as a "proto-astronomer." His father woke him at 3:00 a.m. to observe the dazzling display of fireballs that he documented in drawings. That experience, as well as growing up during the space race of the 1960s, led Keel to pursue a Ph.D. in astronomy. He explained, when I emailed him last summer, that he is a retired professor from the University of Alabama where he taught astronomy. In 2001, he viewed another Leonid storm with his then nine-year-old son, Nathan. He estimated that they saw 1000 meteors that night.

This year's Leonid shower will take place from November 3rd through December 2nd, with the peak activity predicted to take place on the nights of November 17th and 18th. Astronomers also suggest that the pre-dawn hours of November 17th might be worth a look. This year's show is unlikely to be anything like that of 1833 or 1966, but viewers are likely to see about a dozen meteors per hour. I'll be watching. It should be well worth the loss of a little sleep.

Most years the Leonids give off a few dozen meteors per hour. Once every 33 years, the time it takes Tempel-Tuttle to circle the sun, the "shower" can become a "storm."

If you are interested in learning more, visit NASA's webpage on the Leonids at science.nasa.gov/solar-system/meteors-meteorites/leonids/. You can watch Professor Deloria's excellent lecture on the cultural impact of the 1833 Leonid meteor storm at youtube.com/watch?v=LnHHmq-vx94.

Frank Vandervort lives and writes in Ypsilanti. He can be reached at fevandervort@gmail.com.

Leslie Blackburn's Big Pivot:

From Sacred Sexuality to Local Politics

By Grace Pernecky • Photos by Susan Ayer

Editor's Note: We asked Grace Pernecky to go out and write a story about Leslie Blackburn, who has been a practitioner of sacred sexuality in the greater-Ann Arbor area since 2009. Back then, Blackburn had realized that the impact of what they had been learning about their own sacred sexuality in their own life needed to be shared with the rest of the world. Their work has integrated multiple different modalities, and ultimately seeks to reconnect individuals with their sexuality, their spirituality, and each other. In more recent years, Blackburn has also been deeply concerned with issues related to the violent impact of white supremacy embedded in our bodies, systems, and structures and with ancestral grief, healing, and community.

Within the past year, Blackburn's work has pivoted to involvement in the local political scene, where they recently ran in the primary for Lodi Trustee. Blackburn states that this transformation is an extension of the empowerment work they were already doing in sacred sexuality. They ran under the campaign mantra "Protect the land, share the process, and empower the people." This article explores how the arc of Blackburn's life story allowed them to translate their previous life experiences into fuel for building a community based on our relationships with nature, community, our ancestors, and our bodies.

Blackburn, who is 53 years old, was born in rural northern Ohio and moved around a lot as a kid (enrolled in five schools by the time of sixth grade), and eventually ended up in southeastern Michigan, where they have lived for the past 31 years. They have a BS and MS in Mechanical Engineering from Ohio State University and spent 15 years in automotive engineering/product development. Blackburn then became a sexuality educator and spiritual coach.

Blackburn's daughter, Hannah, 22, a professional tattoo artist, lives with Blackburn. Blackburn's long-time life partner, Dixon, ("he is the amazing creator of Dixon's Violin—DixonsViolin.com") also lives with them.

The First Arc:
A White-Knuckled Grip Begins to Loosen

The sun beat down as I pulled up to Leslie Blackburn's house. I glanced down at my phone as I turned off the car. "Come around to the back," stated a text from Leslie, complete with a tree and a purple heart emoji. I smiled and stepped out into unseasonable heat.

As I poked my head around the back corner of the house, Blackburn looked up and called me over with a smile in their voice. They sat at a table on a wooden back porch under an umbrella faded with sunlight and many happy years of use. Their current companion at the table was an old typewriter.

"Sorry, this is just a project I've been tinkering with lately. Be right out!" Blackburn said with their paint-spattered hands in the universal surrender pose that signals the need for a washing.

I made myself comfortable relishing in the warm breeze that flowed through the lush backyard. The natural, outdoor setting for our conversation was full of the sunshine, authenticity, and the philosophy of interconnectedness that Blackburn themselves is so heavily steeped in. I breathed in, breathed out, early summer pollen making my head fuzzy with its perfume.

I had initially asked Blackburn if they would be willing to speak more about their work in sacred sexuality. They had told me that they would love to be interviewed, but had a different direction they would like to take the conversation in. I didn't know what to expect, so I showed up with an open mind and a healthy dose of curiosity.(what I always bring to a deep conversation with a new friend).

Blackburn opened the back door with clean hands and a kind face. We began.

"I started as a 'socialized girl/woman person' who walked a corporate heteronormative life," Blackburn began their saga. For years, they were an endurance athlete with a master's in engineering. Blackburn went on to describe the power that their socialization held on the values and "to do" list that they chose to uphold. "I thought I was supposed to get married, have a car, and do [The Next Thing, and then The Thing After That]." This checklist mentality was pervasive in Blackburn's earlier perspective on life.

For years, they were an endurance athlete with a master's in engineering. Blackburn went on to describe the power that their socialization held on the values and "to do" list that they chose to uphold.

About 15 years into their "first arc," as Blackburn referenced it, they reported that they had a spiritual awakening connected to the pregnancy and birth of their daughter. "This woke me up to seeing the white-knuckled grip on the steering wheel that I was doing with life. [I saw that] the attempt to 'drive my body was not the only answer. I had to let go and start listening to my body."

Blackburn's story is one that is accompanied at each pivotal moment by a lesson learned. At this particular juncture, Blackburn learned to surrender. Through months of trying to force it—"fertility treatments and all these things"—Blackburn eventually reached a point of surrender, expression, and release of grief. It wasn't until they had given up their facade of control that their daughter appeared.

The Second Arc: Sacred Sexuality and Inner Healing

"That's what started the process," Blackburn reflected to me as I sipped my water thoughtfully. "As I started to question who I was [after everything I thought I knew didn't get me pregnant], I started to seek out teachers, guides, and lovers. I started to wake up to my own sexuality. I started to dance in the journey of 'how do I even identify?'"

In their experimentation in self-exploration, Blackburn describes a number of awakenings and self-realizations, including an especially pivotal one which they refer to as their G Spot Awakening. Blackburn reported that they held a molestation trauma from an inappropriate touch they had received when they were 10 years old. "I'd never unblocked it; I hadn't acknowledged and processed it and let it move through me and leave." Blackburn reported that every time their G spot would come into contact with sexual partners, the traumatic memory would surface.

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"In my book, I call them fruitflies," Blackburn said lightly. "Fruitflies are these annoying little flying things that seem to come at random but they're not. For example," they continued. "Every time someone would come into contact with my G spot, this memory would come up."

When Blackburn was able to stop and listen to the story that was coming up when their G spot was activated, they were able to start to unwind themselves from it and open the path to female ejaculation ("a word that uses a binary that I'm not a fan of, but it's the best descriptor we have right now," interjected Blackburn).

"I wanted to just stand on the mountain and shout [this information] to the world! Nobody talks about this stuff and every person needs to know about this!" Blackburn recalled passionately, referring to the great lack of sexual education involving sexual pleasure and joy. This realization launched Blackburn into the work of sacred sexuality. They knew then that they would soon transform from student to teacher.

"Another White Woman on a Spiritual Healing Journey?

During this time of self-exploration, connecting with guides, teachers, and lovers that taught Blackburn the foundational aspects of sacred sexuality and approaches to healing, Blackburn began to write a book. "In those first few years, from 2009 to 2018, I didn't see the privilege in it," Blackburn lamented. "There's so much privilege in that journey, to be able to take these trips to Peru and Egypt that I talk about in my book. So, I wrote this whole book, and in 2018, when I had my own awakening to my whiteness and to the work inherent in being anti-racist, I was like 'Gahhh! I can't publish this thing now! It's just another white woman [talking about self-help]. People will just be like, 'Another one, really?'"

And so, Blackburn painstakingly returned to the book over the course of the next several years, heavily editing and footnoting their work in order to include the next arc of their journey and lessons learned. Blackburn plans to publish the book within the next several months.

Along with their realization of whiteness, which Blackburn writes about in a previous *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* article entitled, Meeting Our Discomfort to Support Collective Liberation (in issue #79), Blackburn took intentional time for reflection and action to understand "what being an ally" actually looks like. "It took time," Blackburn wrote. "I slowed down and listened. I observed my habits of thought and my body sensations in different situations. I also redirected my attention to teachers, influencers, healers, and artists of color in my social media feed. I began studying with folx experienced in unpacking racism from our bodies and started to really unwind the way my body carries white supremacy."

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series

Hosted by Edward Morin, David Jibson, and Lissa Perrin

Second Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Poetry Workshop. All writers welcome to share and discuss their poetry and short fiction. Sign-up for new participants begins 6:45 p.m.

Fourth Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Featured Reader(s) for 50 minutes. Open Mic reading for 1 hour. All writers welcome to share their own or other favorite poetry. Sign-up begins at 6:45 p.m.

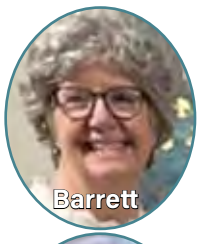
All sessions are virtual and accessible through Zoom.
Email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for Zoom link.

Featured readers

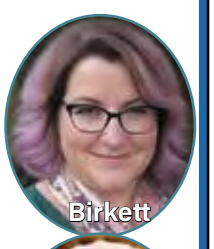
September 25 - Judith Kerman is a poet and multi-artist (singer, performer, crafter). She has published eleven books or chapbooks of poetry, most recently *Definitions* (Fomite Press, 2021), and three books of translations. She founded Earth's Daughters magazine (1971) and Mayapple Press (1978). A retired college professor, she lives in Woodstock, NY.

September 25 - Helen Ruggieri has 2 new books of poetry—*The Sapphires* and *Blue Elegies: Poems for the Birds.* Her book of essays and haibun about natural things is *Camping in the Galaxy*. She lives in upstate New York, where her whole front yard is a garden rather than grass.

10/23/2024 – Featured Readers from the Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle



Kathlene Barrett – poet, artist, editor of publications *Making Waves* and *Beach Combings.*



Nicole Birkett writes, raises sheep, and edits *Making Waves*: LudingtonWriters.org.

Shutta Crum – well published poet, celebrated children's author, www.shutta.com

David Jibson –social worker, poet, edits *Third Wednesday*, facilitates Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle.

Markland Lloyd, Ph.D. - university English teacher & administrator inspired by national parks.

Edward Morin – published poet, song writer, translator, editor, and university teacher.

Lissa Perrin - retired psychotherapist whose poems have appeared in several online and print journals.

December 4 - Sandra Cisneros is a poet, essayist, and fiction writer who explores the lives of working people. Her classic novel, *The House on Mango Street*, celebrates its 40th anniversary. Poetry collections include *Loose Woman* (1995) and *Woman Without Shame* (2022). She has a MacArthur Fellowship and a truckload of other awards.

Sandra Cisneros photo © Keith Dannemiller

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle

The Poetry Series is open to all. There is never a charge.
https://cwcircle.poetry.blog/

Leslie Blackburn's Big Pivot

continued...

Blackburn also started to realize around this time that individual healing and growth was only one pillar of what they wanted their life to incorporate. They spoke about what they call the Four Foundations. On their website, Blackburn writes the following: "All the work that I've done over the last two decades I now see clarified into four resources of support—key relationships that are often ruptured in our experience." Those four entities are nature, community, ancestors, and our own bodies.

At this point, the last thing on their mind was politics.

The Third Arc: "Om-ing" in Office?

Within the past few years, Blackburn has retired from their work as a sacred sexual healer to "listen in." "It's been wonderful to start to meet and deeply connect with friends and community and lovers that aren't just beings that look like me," they said.

In 2023, as a result of this work, Blackburn found themselves involved in a land dispute in Lodi Township. The land in question was forested land with an intact ecosystem that has been unchanged in character by humans from pre-settlement, and it was under threat of development. "So, it's not like this land, which was clear cut for agricultural work at one point has now grown back; this is forest that hasn't been touched yet [by colonization]. To be at risk after all these years?" Blackburn shook their head, "I said, 'hell, no.'"

> "It's been wonderful to start to meet and deeply connect with friends and community and lovers that aren't just beings that look like me."
>
> —Leslie Blackburn

Blackburn became heavily involved in doing the work to protect the land within the township, attending city council meetings and the like, and found themselves hitting a lot of barriers; between trouble finding and being able to access what should have been public data, to feeling "berated, demeaned, or shut down [at council meetings]… my interactions with the township were so painful," Blackburn reflected.

At some point, their friends began to ask them if they'd ever considered running for office. "Hell no, have I considered running for office!" Blackburn laughed.

But after checking in and listening to their body, the land, the trees and the ancestors, the message was clear: "no questions—you need to run," Blackburn heard.

From the get-go, Blackburn knew they couldn't do this alone. "But then, the person who's running for another township position shows up and he says, 'Hi, my name's Eric and I'm running for township clerk, and my husband's running for trustee." Once Blackburn saw that their "fellow Queerdoes are here" (as they put it) they took it as a sign. Their campaign as a Democrat running for Lodi Township Trustee was launched at the beginning of 2024.

The three pillars of Blackburn's campaign are "protect the land, share the process, and empower the people." "It brings all of it full circle," Blackburn reflected aloud. "I just never thought it would happen this way."

> Protect the Land. Share the Process. Empower the People.

It was around this time in our conversation that I started having a coughing attack.

"I'm sorry… There's a… speck of pollen… in my… in my throat… or something," I spluttered, frustrated that drinking water wasn't cutting the mustard and that our conversation might need to come to an early end.

Instead of accepting defeat, Blackburn looked at me with concern yet also with confidence and asked if I would like to try taking some goldenrod tincture. They noted that they make this particular tincture from the goldenrod that grows on the land at their house, as herbalism is also an important aspect of their spiritual practice with the land. "It can be really helpful in calming pollen-related allergies," they said hopefully.

"I would… I would be open to that!" I heaved desperately.

Within seconds of taking the tincture, my coughing stopped. Not only that, but I felt overall better than when I'd initially stepped up to the porch at the beginning of our conversation; the fuzziness in my head subsided. Blackburn practices what they preach—both relational and practical support through human community and through the resources available to us from the land.

"Anyways," I heaved a sigh of relief that we were able to continue our chat. "Leslie, you are such an authentic person. How does running for office align for that? Is it challenging to be authentic when you have to campaign to an audience whose values and beliefs may not align with your own?"

"If I can have my truth and be heard, then I might make more skillful choices around how I'm communicating because then something can [actually] happen. Whereas if I just stay "om-ing" on the side of the mountain, which is a valid path, [no progress is made in society]. I got pretty clear early on that I don't just get to take my spirituality off-grid somewhere and be alone. My calling in this lifetime is to be in our society in community with it. Right now, that means running for office. Which still somehow boggles a part of my brain," Blackburn answered.

For much of Blackburn's voting contingency in this township, Blackburn is not leading the campaign with "Hey, I was a sacred sexuality educator!" "Am I hiding it? No. I'm leading with what's available for people to hear. Sometimes, there's a piece of it that can't be seen immediately because someone will have a trauma reaction to it and [immediately cut off further conversation]."

Blackburn brought our conversation full circle in relating back their current political endeavors to their beginnings in sacred sexual healing:

"There is a lot of power in working with sexual energy as a spiritual practice, or as a practice in enlightenment. But the most profound shifts I saw, and certainly that I saw in myself, was developing the ability to stay present.

That's how it's connected. The way that sacred sexuality, anti-racism, grief work, ancestral healing work, and even politics and campaigning work is connected has to do with being with big energy in the body and building our capacity and resiliency in our body and subtle body to stay with it. To be with big energy as it moves through. Not only in our individual practice, but also in our dynamic relationship with other beings.

Whether it's the pulsing rise of orgasmic energy or the wail of grief, I need to be present with my whole body to let it pass through. That is also true for the discomfort of anti-racism work—it is not comfortable to recognize when we've created harm. We cannot disappear when we notice this but [need to]stay in relationship with and be in reparations of our own self-care in how we treat ourselves when we've created harm. Politically speaking, the big energy moving through me is the voice; being in my truth and having my voice move through me with authenticity and love.

The more we can be true to who we are and let that energy come through clearly, cleanly, authentically, and reliably, the better our lives and the lives of those around us will be."

If you'd like to contact Blackburn, you can email her at friends@leslieforlodi.org. Blackburn will be advancing to the November general election after a succesful primary performance, earning 752 votes on August 6th.

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Fall Into Fitness — Seven Fun Ways to Ease into Fitness

By Angela Verges

Do you remember when you were a child and you watched mom or dad rake all the orange, yellow, or brown leaves scattered on the lawn into a pile? I remember how that pile was as high as my waistline (now I can't even see my waistline), and it was just waiting for me to fall into them. And I did. Nowadays, I think of fall as a great time to refocus on fitness.

Fall offers unique fitness opportunities such as apple picking, pumpkin carving, and fall-themed walks which can make exercising more fun. But, I experienced an even more unique fitness opportunity recently: I accidentally engaged in a new workout—a Lycra Lunge-a-thon.

I experienced an even more unique fitness opportunity recently: I accidentally engaged in a new workout—a Lycra Lunge-a-thon.

My fitness journey has consisted of many forms of exercise, but this workout was a Cardio Carnival. In my mind there was a ringmaster announcing, "Next up a feat never seen before…." The culprit of my woes was a new pair of leggings that were on sale and cute. The long adhesive removable tag affixed to the leg read *Large*.

There were no fitting rooms at the store so I grabbed the size I would typically wear and bought them without trying them on. As I attempted to try the pants on at home, I realized the label was misleading.

Instead of giving shoppers the size information, there should have been a warning that stated: *Due to shortage of supplies, less material was used to make this garment*. If that statement was attached somewhere, I would have known to purchase the next larger size.

It's good to add variety to your workout; it's like trying different seasonings on your food– fresh basil, chopped green scallions, and lemon zest. But this workout variety I was embarking upon was more like a variety show. It was like playing a game of *Twister*—left foot in, right hand reach, and pull pant leg. I was thrown into this workout without a warm-up; it was an immediate high intensity training.

There was no time for deep breathing. It was rapid fire, short quick breaths. I had a flash back to child birthing class where we practiced breathing using the phrase, "*he, he, whooo; he, he, whooo.*"

There was no time for deep breathing. It was rapid fire, short quick breaths. I had a flash back to child birthing class where we practiced breathing using the phrase, "*he, he, whooo; he, he, whooo.*"

I was worried the leggings wouldn't make it over my protruding belly. I quickly discovered there was no need for worry. The elastic high-rise pants barely made it over my knees and refused to stretch up any further.

The leggings gripped my legs like a stiff exercise band. I left them there and began doing squats, standing donkey kicks, and other cardio moves I learned over the years. After a few minutes of intense fighting with the pants, I gave up and began the cool down.

In a seated position on the floor, my breathing became slower and more deliberate. I moved like a contortionist as I struggled to remove the leggings one leg at a time. After the heavy breathing subsided, I relaxed my body, then threw the ball of spandex across the room. I'd had enough of the Lycra Lunge-a-thon.

Whether it's an evening walk, early morning stretches, or riding a Peloton bike with a virtual coach, I have done them all at some point. I'm learning that every day is another opportunity to start fresh. There is no expiration date for this journey.

When exercising, leave your jewelry at home; that lovely choker necklace you're so fond of, can pose a choking hazard. You don't want it to live up to its name.

Here are seven tips for fun fall fitness:

1. The next time you're in a store fitting room struggling to try on merchandise or squeezing into an outfit at home, flex your muscles, and count it as exercise.

2. When exercising, leave your jewelry at home; that lovely choker necklace you're so fond of, can pose a choking hazard. You don't want it to live up to its name.

3. Think outside the box: decorate for the harvest season with bales of hay and pumpkins, and you have all the equipment you need for fall fitness. Hay bale burpees provide a rustic twist on this intense workout.

4. Balance your fitness with fun, fall foods. You determine what that looks like. I told a friend about how I struggle with stubborn menopausal belly fat. She suggested that I try eating according to my blood type. She asked, "Do you know your blood type?"
   I said, "Yes it's O…besity."

5. Add the element of layer management to your workout. If you have ever experienced menopausal symptoms, now is the time to use them to your advantage. You may have heard how night sweats and hot flashes can resemble a game of Hokey Pokey–leg in the cover, leg out of the cover. Then there's jacket on, jacket off, right arm in, left arm out. As you are constantly putting on and taking off layers, you are stimulating muscles and joints.

6. Make your fall workouts comfy and cozy. Considering the temperatures are cooler in the fall, pull out your favorite yoga pants that are threadbare, because, well, they're your favorite. Grab that weather beaten hoodie that you only wear around the house. Create your cozy ensemble and be uniquely you.

7. Stay positive. Focus on the benefits you're gaining. Celebrate small victories along the way. Remember what humorist Erma Bombeck once said, "If you can't make it better, you can laugh at it."

Don't give up on your fitness journey. Make it a sustainable part of your lifestyle. When you hit a speed bump, go over it, and keep moving. Remember to laugh often, laugh loudly, and love every minute of it. Laughter burns calories.

Angela Verges is a native Detroiter who blogs about her wacky kids, weight gain, and wild chin hair, among other things. She views life's situations uniquely through steamed eyeglasses due to hot flashes. You can find her on stage bringing laughter to others. Follow Verges on Instagram at writermama223, on Facebook @angela.verges or visit her website angelaverges.net.

Protect and Restore Your Liver Naturally

By Shannon Roznay

When it comes to promoting long term health and avoiding chronic illnesses, your liver is of the utmost importance. It helps to modify and neutralize toxins, plays a major role in digestion and absorption, and works to regulate blood sugar around the clock. At this moment in history our livers are working harder than ever before! We are currently exposed to multiple toxic substances every day and are ingesting chemicals through our food supply, water sources, the air we breathe, and the products we use on and around our bodies. As such, it has never been more important to pamper your liver and give it the help it needs to run smoothly for years to come.

We are currently exposed to multiple toxic substances every day and are ingesting chemicals through our food supply, water sources, the air we breathe, and the products we use on and around our bodies.

In the medical world they test liver enzymes in the blood and may also look to identify fatty liver disease via an ultrasound. Also known as "hepatic steatosis," fatty liver disease is a condition characterized by the accumulation of fat in the liver cells. Any elevation in liver enzymes should be considered cause for concern, as this indicates damage to the cells. Inflammatory processes and fatty liver can eventually lead to more severe conditions like liver fibrosis and cirrhosis if left untreated.

Most people do not know without testing if their liver is stressed but some common symptoms that would suggest a problem include environmental allergies, skin rashes, cracked skin (usually on the heels), yellowing of the skin or eyes, itchy skin with no visible rash, periodic pain under the right ribcage, right shoulder pain, and digestive disturbances to name a few.

Understanding the major causes of fatty liver stress and fatty liver is crucial for prevention and effective management. Furthermore, adopting dietary and lifestyle changes, along with exploring holistic treatment options, can significantly aid in reversing the disease. There is NO standard medical treatment for liver damage, and in fact one of the main causes of damage to liver tissue includes medications, both prescription and over the counter.

There is NO standard medical treatment for liver damage, and in fact one of the main causes of damage to liver tissue includes medications, both prescription and over the counter.

Excess body weight, especially fat around the abdomen, increases the risk of fat accumulation in the liver. Insulin resistance, commonly associated with obesity, leads to elevated insulin levels in the blood, promoting fat deposition in the liver. Strive to keep your fasting glucose levels at 85 or under—this is more stringent of a level than is recommended on standard blood work but it's a worthwhile goal to prevent issues with insulin resistance. Additionally, have your fasting insulin tested. We do this with our patients and often see the red flag of elevated insulin before any other numbers show a problem.

Of course, the best way to keep blood glucose and insulin levels low is to avoid foods high in refined carbohydrates, sugar, and refined oils. High fructose corn syrup is a major contributor to excess fat accumulation and is unfortunately given to many children in the form of juices and soda, and many snack foods. This has led to a high number of children showing signs of liver disease as well! Artificial sweeteners like Nutrasweet or Splenda should also be avoided, as the body will still react by raising blood sugar even though these sweeteners do not contain sugar.

Alcohol consumption is a well-known cause for liver disease, as it raises insulin levels as well as being a toxin that needs to be neutralized. Alcohol should be used in moderation, and avoided completely if you already have signs of any liver stress.

What should we do instead to promote a healthy liver?

- Eating a diet rich in omega 3 fats, high quality protein, organic vegetables and fruits, and limit refined, sugary foods and high fructose corn syrup is key.
- Regular exercise and activity is excellent for keeping sugar levels balanced and also promotes lymphatic movement which allows toxins to be circulated through the liver to be neutralized.
- Include foods rich in B vitamins, as the liver needs these to complete its processes effectively. This can include nutritional yeast, eggs, and eating liver as well. A high-quality B vitamin supplement is also helpful. Beets and beet greens also contain compounds that support liver health.
- Home remedies that promote liver health include supplements or teas such as milk thistle, dandelion root, and turmeric.
- Using an organic castor oil pack over the liver has been a long-standing recommendation of natural health providers and has recently become trendy thanks to social media. It's an extremely effective way to reduce inflammation and promote healthy liver function. We carry these in our office and countless women have also reported improvement in their hormonal balance after using them—the liver has to clear excess hormones as well as other chemicals, so the outside hormones we're exposed to through diet and plastics can affect our health as well.
- Coffee enemas have also been a tried and true remedy for helping increase liver function and promote production of glutathione—a powerful antioxidant made in the liver.

In our office, we identify any specific toxins, food sensitivities, microbes, or other factors that may be negatively affecting an individual's liver in order to determine if there are specific nutrients or herbs that may be useful in their case.

Of course, the best way to keep blood glucose and insulin levels low is to avoid foods high in refined carbohydrates, sugar, and refined oils.

Liver stress and fatty liver disease are complex conditions with multiple contributing factors, but the liver is the most easily regenerated and healed tissue in the body, so adopting the above strategies will absolutely yield results. Exploring holistic treatment options is also essential which may include working closely with an alternative healthcare professional to develop a comprehensive treatment plan tailored to your specific needs and circumstances.

Dr. Shannon Roznay, D.C. has been practicing in Ann Arbor since 2005 at Thrive Wellness Center. She has specialized in holistic nutitional care since 2006 and teaching other practitioners since 2008. Learn more by calling (734) 470-6766 or visit online at thrive-wellness-center.com.

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Sustainable Health

Taking Wellness One Day at a Time

By Julie Kouyate

As a coach in the wellness industry, I am constantly shown the stark truth about what ails most of us humans. We are looking for drastic change, and we want it immediately! We tend to know what it is that we need, but getting there is extremely overwhelming. Rather than suffer from disappointment about not getting "the thing," many people choose to disengage from the goal all together.

As a coach in the wellness industry, I am constantly shown the stark truth about what ails most of us humans. We are looking for drastic change, and we want it immediately!

Small daily improvements are what make us feel as if we are honoring our commitment to ourselves and the health/state of being that we desire. Wellness is an act of doing—that is why the suffix "ness" is behind the word WELL. In my life, I go by a certain set of energetic and physical markers to determine what I will do during my days to feel my best, and then I also have some very simple ritual type practices that I have ingrained into my daily life as well.

I'll begin with the energetic factors. Each day is new and brings about many challenges, opportunities, and fresh new energy. Rigidity to our "programs" of wellness goes against the idea of being well. I love daily exercise, but it doesn't always happen. Instead, I will gently ask what would feel best for my body to do each day. Sometimes the answer is to do a dance workout, go for a walk in the woods, sleep, do planks, swim, do yoga, or any number of things. We really need to follow the energy as it presents itself rather than only do XYZ because that is the "goal." Feeling-oriented goals and asking what feels best for optimal health should be a question we are asking ourselves each day or week.

Next, are physical markers. If we recently had a loss, injury, a bad night of sleep, or a big stressor, then the answer might be to help our nervous system by doing that which regulates the nervous system. It's troublesome to the body, and psyche as a whole, if we pour salt on a wound and hype up our body's arousal system with intensity when all it wishes for is nourishment and soothing. I have witnessed people who soften in healing to go right back to a hardened mindset and think they have to lift heavy things in crossfit, or save the entire world from suffering, only to almost by force, land in bed doing the nurturing that their psyche needed in the first place.

Wellness is an act of doing—that is why the suffix "ness" is behind the word WELL.

Daily habits should be small and feel good to you! I am a somatic healer, and I truly feel the best way toward wellness is being present with our bodies. My small acts of care are always associated with the senses. I love to apply homemade oil to my breasts and face using lymphatic massage with a rigorousness to it. This helps me to love my body, enhance the health of the tissues, and bring healing energy to myself. I also synthesize any new daily rituals with other daily practices to set them into stone.

For example, I created a habit of ingesting my daily microgreens and nutrients with dishwashing! If a new habit is coupled with other no brainer jobs/habits they will become ingrained. That is precisely why I do breast massage right after the shower. Voilá, no more trying to remember: it's as ingrained as brushing my teeth.

As far as more daily wellness habits that make me feel healthy, I use the work week to eat smaller portions, drink Chaga mushroom complex instead of coffee, eat fresh whole foods without sugar or carbohydrates, and go to sleep at an early hour. It is now habitual for me to treat my body gently in this way during my work week in order to serve my clients to my best ability.

We don't have to incorporate healthy tools into our lives so drastically that we can't even sense if they work for us or not.

When the weekend comes, I can loosen my regimen. I enjoy coffee or go out to eat, and perhaps have a dessert. This really works for me too. I feel that I have balance in my sleep and diet patterns. It's so regulating to the hormonal and nervous systems to have that clean energy all week long, and then let that open up for more flexibility to have a little enjoyment on the weekends.

We don't have to incorporate healthy tools into our lives so drastically that we can't even sense if they work for us or not. Oftentimes a slow and calculated approach to incorporating a new wellness regimen is how we ingrain it into our body memory. Everything doesn't have to be fully integrated yesterday. Take your time with things and see what is the best fit based on what feels right. Sometimes we can be so valiant in an effort to "take the supplement," we aren't getting in touch with the fact that it might make us feel sick or is showing us that our bodies don't need, support, or want that particular thing. So let's listen up, check our energy, make exceptions for what's happening in our life, and pair a new habit to one that you have on lock. It works. Happy wellness!

Julie Kouyate is a BodyMind coach and a licensed massage therapist. She lives in Ann Arbor with her husband, Mady Kouyate Griot, daughter and four sons. You can learn more about her offerings, including bodymind coaching, somatic healing sessions, "playshops," retreats, and dance classes with live drumming, at kouyatehealingarts.com, or call (734) 330-7903.

Weekend Getaways

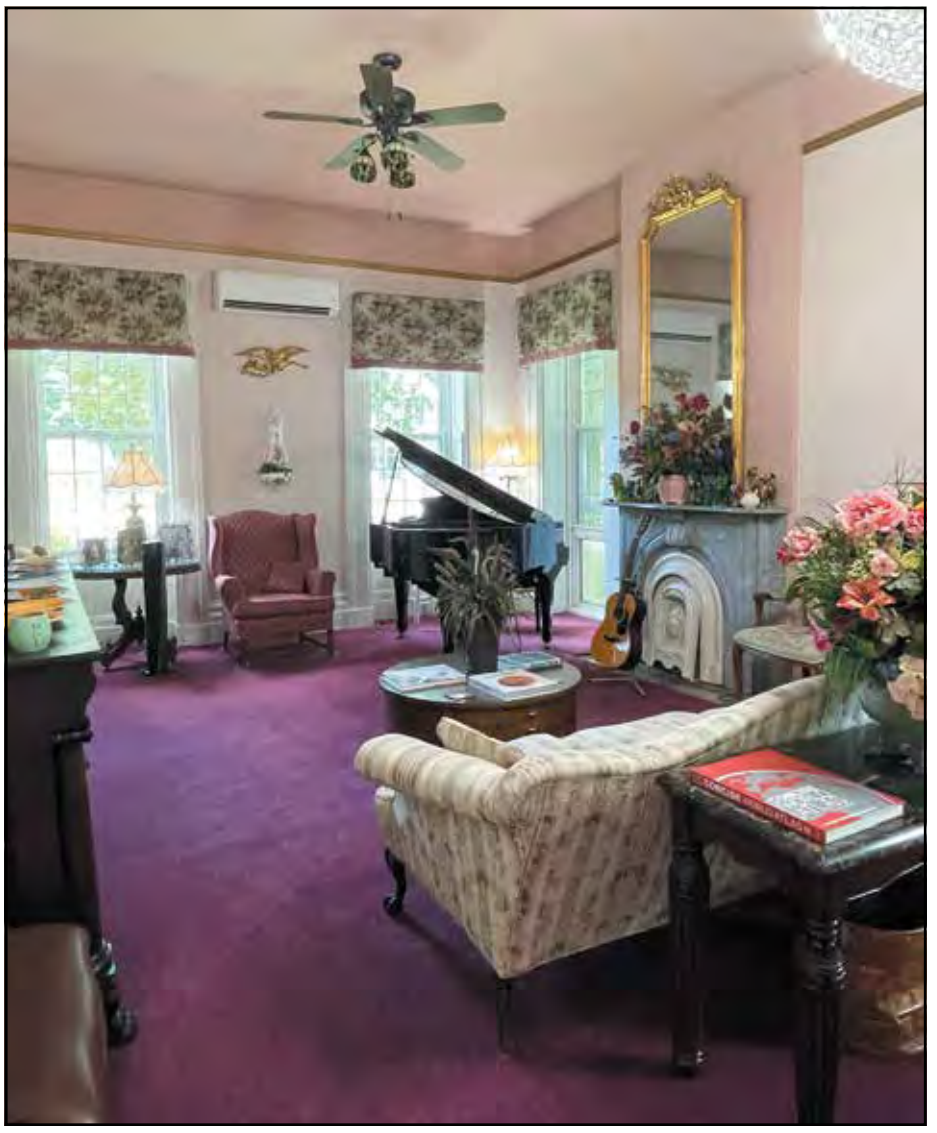
Around the Corner – Hillsdale County Excursion

By Petula Brown

While I enjoy my solo getaways, it's a special treat to share travel experiences with family. Still, planning a trip with a moody 14-year-old during her spring break was a challenge. For her part, my daughter was fine with spending spring break in her room. Efforts to introduce her to self-care practices varied from adequate (hair care) to asinine (room cleaning). I hoped a mini mother-daughter retreat would be a means to ease her into greater receptivity toward self-care. Something financially reasonable, emotionally enriching, and minimally boring was the order of the day. As always, supporting local businesses is a priority during my travels, but I wasn't inclined to spend hours in a car to reach our destination. I was drawn to a proximity to Ann Arbor and laid-back vibe.

Though it has a fascinating history as a stop for the Underground Railroad and was once sold for $1, Layne's introduction set the tone for our visit as one focused on peace and relaxation.

The aura of calm began with our arrival at Munro House, the bed and breakfast serving as our home base. Considering the stately tone of the exterior columns, we were surprised by a casual greeting from Layne, the tween son of owner Chris Riley. Without hesitation, Layne provided a tour of the posh downstairs



Although Clara's Room was a comforting experience, the secret of Munro Houses's appeal lies squarely with innkeeper, Chris. He's a responsive host and impressive cook—the perfect combination for a bed and breakfast.

area that, at first glance, was quite a disconnect from Layne's low-key style. I was surprised to learn that Munro House is the oldest house in Hillsdale County, built in 1834. Though it has a fascinating history as a stop for the Underground Railroad and was once sold for $1, Layne's introduction set the tone for our visit as one focused on peace and relaxation.

I credit that tone with helping us adjust to sharing accommodations in "Clara's Room." It's queen iron bed, Jacuzzi tub, and Franklin gas stove created the perfect setting for a romantic stay. Yet, the seating area and desk space gave us room to read, eat, and enjoy streaming apps provided by our accommodations. One of our favorite parts of our shared bed was the divine bedding. The bedsheets had a softness that drew us in, even though neither of us were looking forward to sharing bed space.

Although Clara's Room was a comforting experience, the secret of Munro's appeal lies squarely with innkeeper, Chris. He's a responsive host and impressive cook—the perfect combination for a bed and breakfast. Chris is also able to balance being approachable and unintrusive, so I never felt like we were invading his family's home. We enjoyed spending time in Munro House with Chris, Layne, and their three Scottish terriers, but its proximity to downtown

Jonesville meant that local restaurants were only a walkable couple blocks away. The closest options were upscale Olivia's and casual Saucy Dog's. Like the city of Jonesville itself, the dining scene has a quaint, small-town vibe.

Located in the heart of downtown Jonesville, Olivia's Chop House exudes a contemporary atmosphere. The soft lighting and dark wood furnishings provided an elegant backdrop. The menu offered familiar American dishes (chicken tenders and burgers) that appealed to my teen. I opted for the unfamiliar Black & Bleu Tuna that combined two of my favorite foods—ahi tuna and blue cheese—to create an unexpectedly, well-balanced meal.

The welcoming tone started by Layne and Chris at Munro House was evident in exchanges with businesses and individuals throughout the weekend that reinforced our efforts to have a positive mother-daughter experience.

Across the street from Olivia's, Saucy Dog's BBQ. The funky décor pays homage to its creator's love of Boxer dogs with a laid-back vibe attractive to families and friends looking to hang loose. The menu helps create a Cheers-like atmosphere. Dishes like the St. Louis Rib Sampler and The Mutt, a hot dog loaded with bacon strips, baked beans, and mustard, encourage visitors to eschew their Sunday best attire for t-shirts, jeans, and sandals.

While we were content with staying in Jonesville, innkeeper Chris encouraged us to check out Hillsdale, a town less than 10 miles south. It has a walkable downtown with easy parking. Attractions include options for history buffs (Hillsdale County Courthouse, Grosvenor House Museum) and community-conscious shoppers (Volume One Books, Smith's Flowers & Gifts). However, our destination was Toasted Mud. Ideal for art enthusiasts of all ages looking for a hands-on experience, the paint-your-own pottery studio offers dozens of pieces and supplies for individuals and groups to explore their creative sides. It was the perfect activity to give my teen a break from her usual tech-centric habits.

As she was crafting her artistic vision, I strolled around a slightly hilly downtown and discovered Mrs. Stock's Park. The well-kept grounds, nearly ten acres maintained by the Hillsdale Garden Club, included a pond, bridge, and fountains. Benches are widely spaced to give visitors a means to create space for contemplation and meditation. A distinctive feature is a bronze sculpture of Winona, the daughter of Chief Baw Beese of the Potawatomi tribe, which was settled near Hillsdale in the mid-1800's. Though steps from downtown, the recent installation of rod iron fencing imbue the park with a serene charm.

The welcoming tone started by Layne and Chris at Munro was evident in exchanges with businesses and individuals throughout the weekend that reinforced our efforts to have a positive mother-daughter experience. The sense of community and culture are demonstrated by the numerous volunteer-led festivals, fairs, and performances hosted within the county. In summary, Hillsdale County offers a socially-engaged and culturally-rich environment where community and tradition play a central role in daily life that influenced the visitor experience.

Learn more about the businesses we visited by visiting online: munrohouse.com, oliviaschophouse.com, saucydogsbbq.com, and facebook.com/toastedmud. Learn more about Hillsdale county at cityofhillsdale.org.

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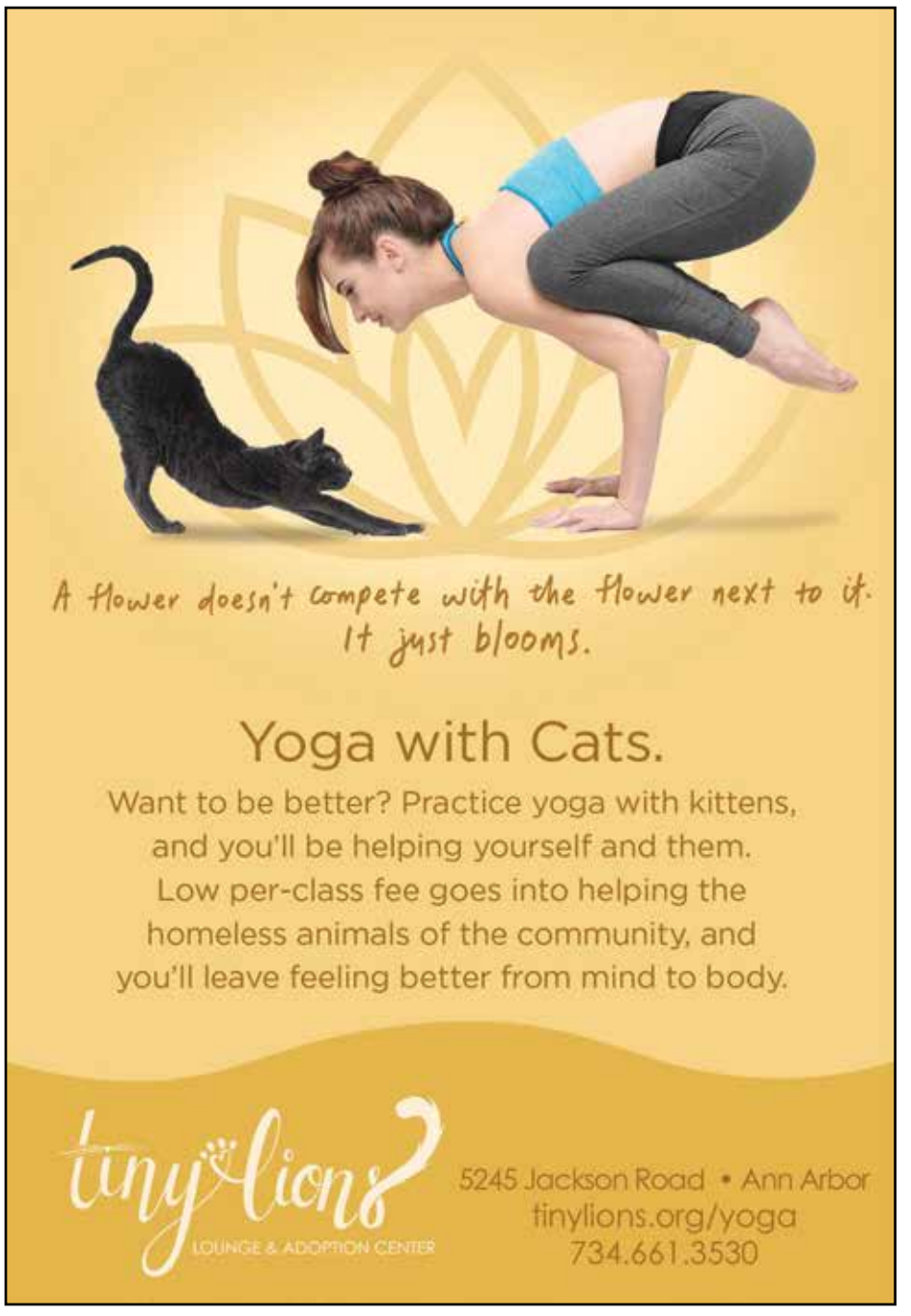
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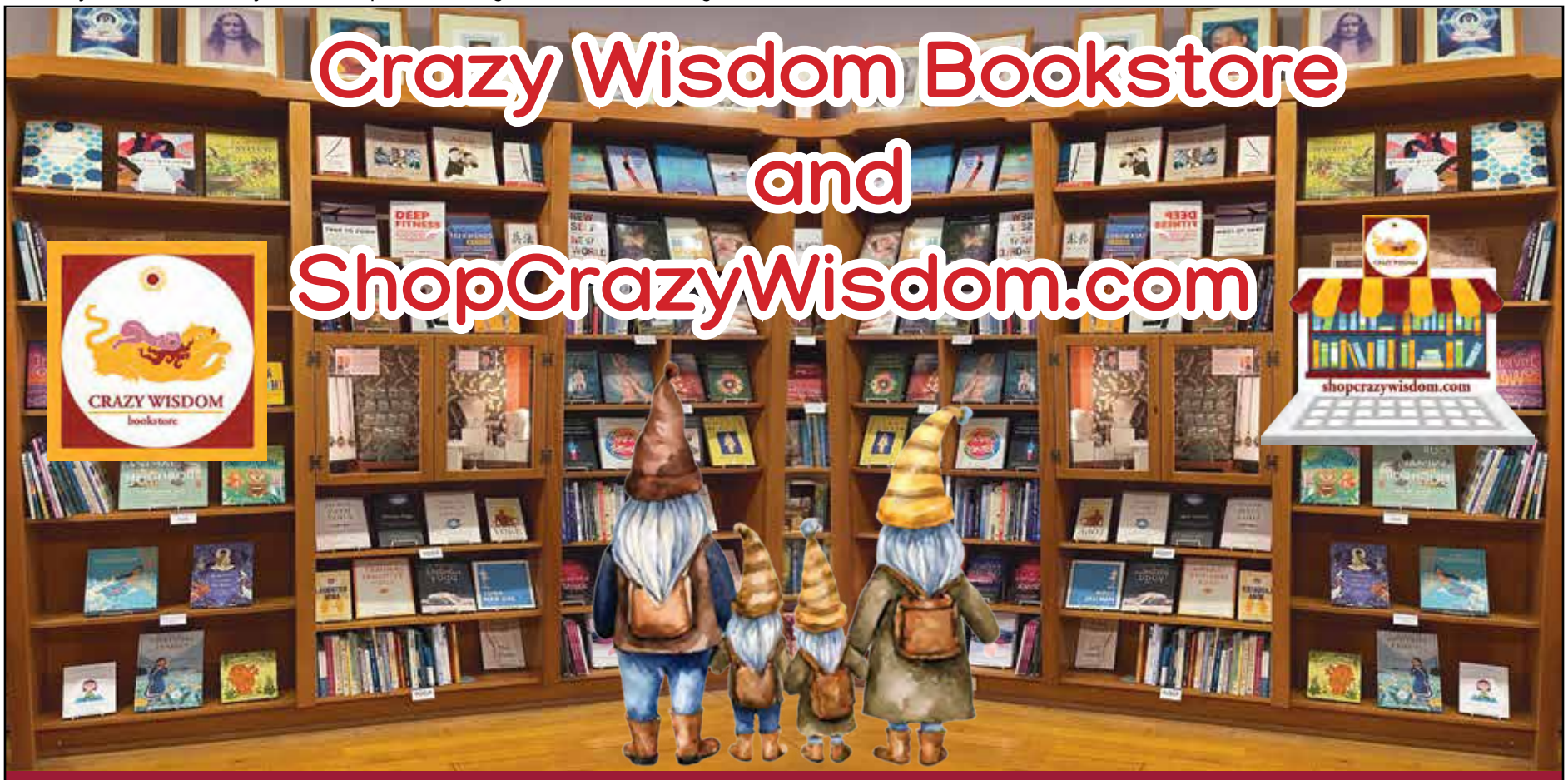

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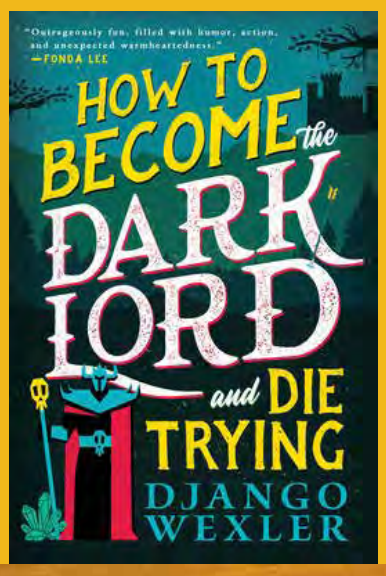
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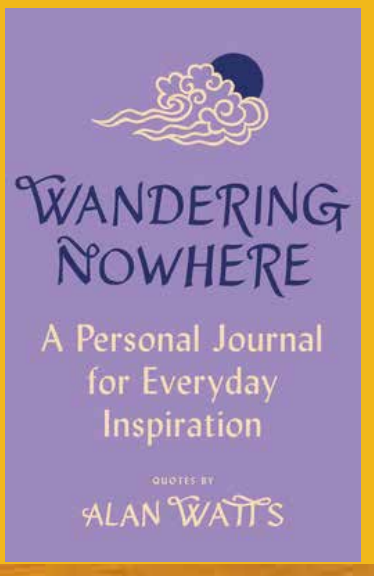

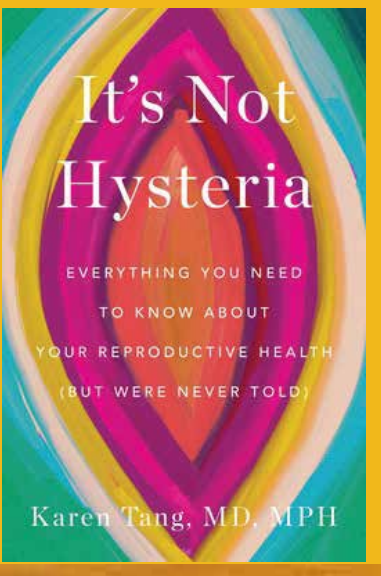

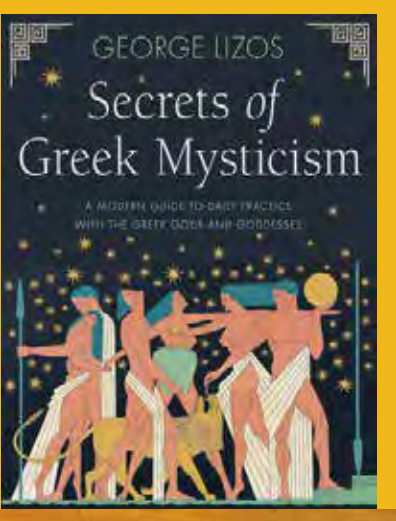

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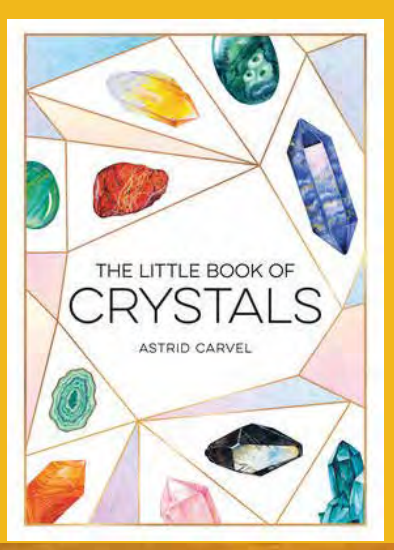

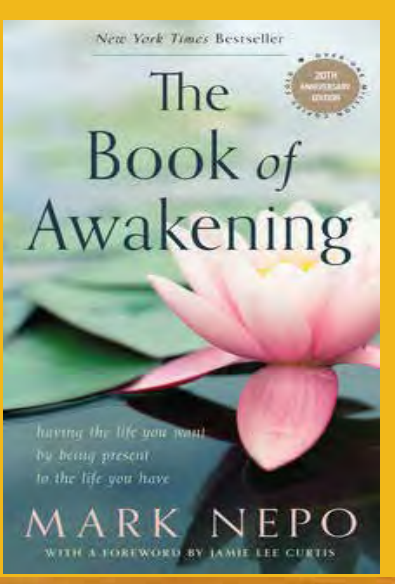
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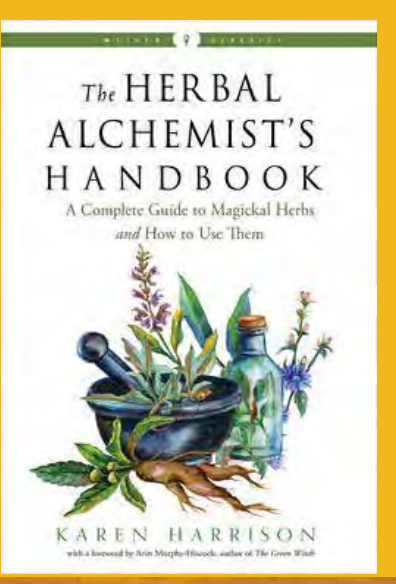
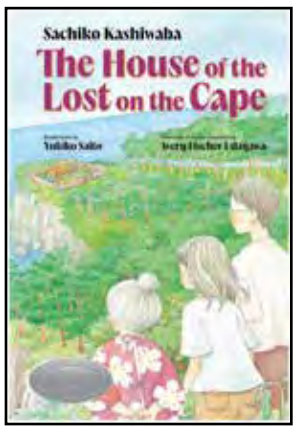


The Crazy Wisdom Kids Section

Our Book Picks for Kids and Tweens



Peek-A-Boo Haiku: A Lift-the-Flap Book
By Danna Smith, illustrated by Teagan White

Warm breezes blowing,
pond open for summer fun—
slip, slide, belly ride!
(Peek-a-boo, OTTER!)

Each haiku in this lift-the-flap board book will have readers guessing the animal it describes—with the answer revealed under a flap on each page! With lovely text, sweet illustrations, and cute creatures, this lyrical and interactive book is a joy to read!

Cicada Symphony
By Sue Fliess, illustrated by Gareth Lucas

There are about three thousand different kinds of cicadas on earth. Some species emerge from the ground every year, while others only come up every thirteen or seventeen years. But no matter how much time passes before they dig their way to the surface, the result is the same: up to trillions of clumsy (but harmless!) insects flying, clicking, and buzzing all around us. Using a combination of rhythmic, rhyming verse and fun facts, this story describes the life cycle of the cicada and helps readers better understand this fascinating insect.

The House of the Lost on the Cape
by Sachiko Kashiwaba, illustrated by Yukiko Saito

In the wake of a devastating earthquake and tsunami, Yui, fleeing her violent husband, and Hiyori, a young orphan, are taken in by a strange but kind old lady named Kiwa in the small town of Kitsunezaki. The newly formed family finds refuge in a mayoiga, a lost house, perched atop a beautiful cape overlooking the sea. While helping to rebuild Kitsunezaki, the three adapt to their new lives and supernatural new home, slowly healing from their troubled pasts. Kiwa regales Yui and Hiyori with local legends—from the shapeshifting fox-woman who used to roam the mountains, to the demon Agamé and a sea snake who once terrorized the townspeople, preying upon their grief and fears until they trapped the snake and the demon's claws in an underwater cave.

But when mysterious and sinister events start happening around town, the three fear the worst. Did the earthquake release Agamé and the sea snake into the world again? Kiwa, Yui, and Hiyori join forces with a merry band of kappa river spirits, a bold zashiki warashi house spirit, and flying Jizō guardian statues to save their new family and home and banish Agamé and the snake once and for all. Now a hit anime film, The House of the Lost on the Cape is a heartwarming tale about the strength of family and friendship in the face of natural and mythical forces.

National Monuments of the USA
By Cameron Walker, illustrated by Chris Turnham

Packed with maps and fascinating facts about the history, architecture, flora, and fauna in some of the most visited National Monuments in the United States, this gorgeously illustrated book showcases the nation's most historically important and amazing places.Brimming with facts, activities, and beautiful illustrations, the National Parks of the USA series of books immerses young people in the wonders of America's outdoors. Learn about the wonderful wildlife, stunning scenery, and rare plants that inhabit these precious outdoor spaces. Celebrate these beautiful and rare locations and be awed by the diversity and grandeur of the national parks' living landscapes.

Stars of the Night: The Courageous Children of the Czech Kindertransport
By Caren Stelson, illustrated by Selina Alko

This powerful story is told from the collective perspective of the children who were rescued from Czechoslovakia on the eve of World War II, as Hitler's campaign of hatred toward Jews and political dissidents took hold. The narrative starts in 1938 and follows the children as they journey to foster families in England for the duration of the war, return to Prague afterward in an unsuccessful search for their parents, and eventually connect with Nicholas Winton, a British former stockbroker who was instrumental in bringing them to safety. Winton and the Czech Kindertransport ultimately rescued 669 children from Nazi persecution. Award-winning author Caren Stelson teams up with acclaimed illustrator Selina Alko to sensitively tell this tale of survival and defiance in the face of tyranny.

You may purchase these books at shopcrazywisdom.com

Photo by Hilary Nichols and Mariah Zeigler

The Community High Resource Program: A Student's Perspective

Photo by Mariah Zeigler

By Jack Lewis and Mariah Zeigler (CHS Students) and Hilary Nichols (Teacher)

We asked our fellow Community High School students, Claire Lewis and Jacqueline Boynton, to share their perspective about the community resource program at Community High and their experience in photography class.

We learned that the biggest thing that pushed Claire Lewis out of her comfort zone was how she dressed for her CR photoshoots. For one such photoshoot, she remembers being dressed up in a long, puffy, royal blue dress. Shooting location: the middle of nowhere. "I couldn't tell you where it was," Lewis said, "We just drove until we saw a spot."

She and three other Community High School students drove deep into the Michigan countryside in the backseat of Community Resource (CR) teacher Hilary Nichols' car. Balanced precariously in Nichols' trunk was an entire living-room chair, costume trunk, and step stool, plus camera equipment. As soon as they stepped out, students Jacqueline Boynton, Ionie Steudle, and Julia Harrison all had cameras in hand while Nichols directed Lewis into a variety of captivating poses.

The process leading up to the gallery show required that the students take the wheel and have creative control; they had to decide on the theme of their shoots, design costumes, scout locations, and find models.

"It was just very Hilary. She's just kind of wild in the way she thinks and the way she wants to explore everything," Lewis said. "I think that was a time that I just remember most because of how kind of out of the ordinary it was."

"Our final project was having a gallery and we had ours at the Cafe Verde gallery in the People's Food Co-Op, just down the street from Community High. We did a lot of planning. We all had a photo shoot that we wanted to do, and so Hilary wanted us to put in a lot of time and thinking beforehand," Lewis said.

The process leading up to the gallery show required that the students take the wheel and have creative control; they had to decide on the theme of their shoots, design costumes, scout locations, and find models. Luckily, they learned basic camera skills in the early weeks of their class, so they were well equipped to take the lead on their final project. "I had to just trust and believe in the process because when Hilary introduced the final I was like, 'Wait, I can't do all that. That's crazy. Like, I can't be a director of my own stuff,' but I did. And it was good," Boynton said.

"I think CR helps students really discover what they're truly passionate about," CR monitor Becky Brent said. Brent assists students in finding and creating classes that fit their interests by exploring classes beyond the conventional curriculum and ones that include hands-on experiences out in the world that can't be recreated in a classroom.

"I think it starts with a student realizing that they have a passion toward a subject or an interest toward a career that we just don't offer an educational opportunity for here," Brent said. "And that's kind of the beauty of the program—the learning then connects to the community."

Brent is just one of the many CR monitors at CHS that helps to guide students to new opportunities as well as connecting them to professionals in the community.

"I think the CR program just gave me the opportunity to explore photography in a way that I haven't had before," Lewis said. "I think that Hilary Nichols helped me push myself in a way that I don't think I would [have] if just in journalism."

Photo by Jacqueline Boynton

The Community Resource Program: A Teacher's Perspective
By Teacher Hilary Nichols

The community resource program is offered for all Community High School students to intern or apprentice in a workplace setting alongside a professional to ignite and expand their professional goals. The CR counseling department at Community High School supports the learning of these students to meet their criteria in multidisciplinary studies. In 2023, I was approached by sophomore Ionie Stuedel. She asked if she could intern with Hilary Nichols Photography for the Spring semester. I was excited to share my passion, experience, and knowledge with an eager student. She then expanded the query to see if she could include her three friends. Happily, Claire Lewis, Julia Harrison, and Jacqueline Boynton joined the group. Our semester began with a photographic survey, to explore the many fields of photography. We looked at magazines and billboards and the world around to expand their awareness of documentary, photojournalism, landscape, and fashion photography.

The community resource program is offered for all Community High School students to intern or apprentice in a workplace setting alongside a professional to ignite and expand their professional goals.

As a student-designed program they were tasked with compiling their own resource guide from Youtube, Instagram, and Pinterest to create a sort of vision board of what style of photography they would be most interested in. With cameras in hand, we approached each class as a field trip to wander town and the surrounding areas, discovering their passions and expanding their skills. Once they determined their key interest, we deepened their focus. Working in pairs, their creative partnerships grew each week, to build a body of work that they designed and orchestrated themselves. They scouted locations, planned settings, picked costuming, and crafted their compositions, then continued with the tasks of editing, printing, and framing their work. The semester culminated in their student-led artist reception at Verde Cafe and Gallery. These teen photographers impressed me, not only with their artistry and event planning, but mostly with their perspective shift from student to artist. Witnessing them fine-tune their viewpoint to see the world from the vantage point of an artist with curiosity was the most gratifying gain of the semester.

Community High School teacher Tracy Anderson said, "In class, Ionie had a bunch of her photos from your Community Resource class up on her screen. From across the room, they were breathtaking. I went over to talk to her about them, and fifteen minutes later, we had a plan for her to develop a larger fashion/lifestyle section in our magazine. The other day when I was entering work into a national competition, I was amazed by the work that was coming out of your CR. The angles, the colors, the stories...they were all amazing. I love that you get students to really think about what the photo is going to be before the shoot happens. There is always that moment of action, reaction, surprise in the pieces, but there is also the feeling that there was work and thought and creativity that went into the photo. It is stunning. I am so grateful that our students at CHS get the chance to study with you and learn."

In 2024, Community High school sophomores Jack Lewis and Mariah Zeigler approached me to repeat this CR offering. I was happy to reprise the role of photography teacher. The two close friends had their own vision for their CR

I think the CR program just gave me the opportunity to explore photography in a way that I haven't had before.

—Jack Lewis

Photo by Jack Lewis

WORDS AND PICTURES — STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHERS SHARE FOCUS

Photo by Hilary Nichols

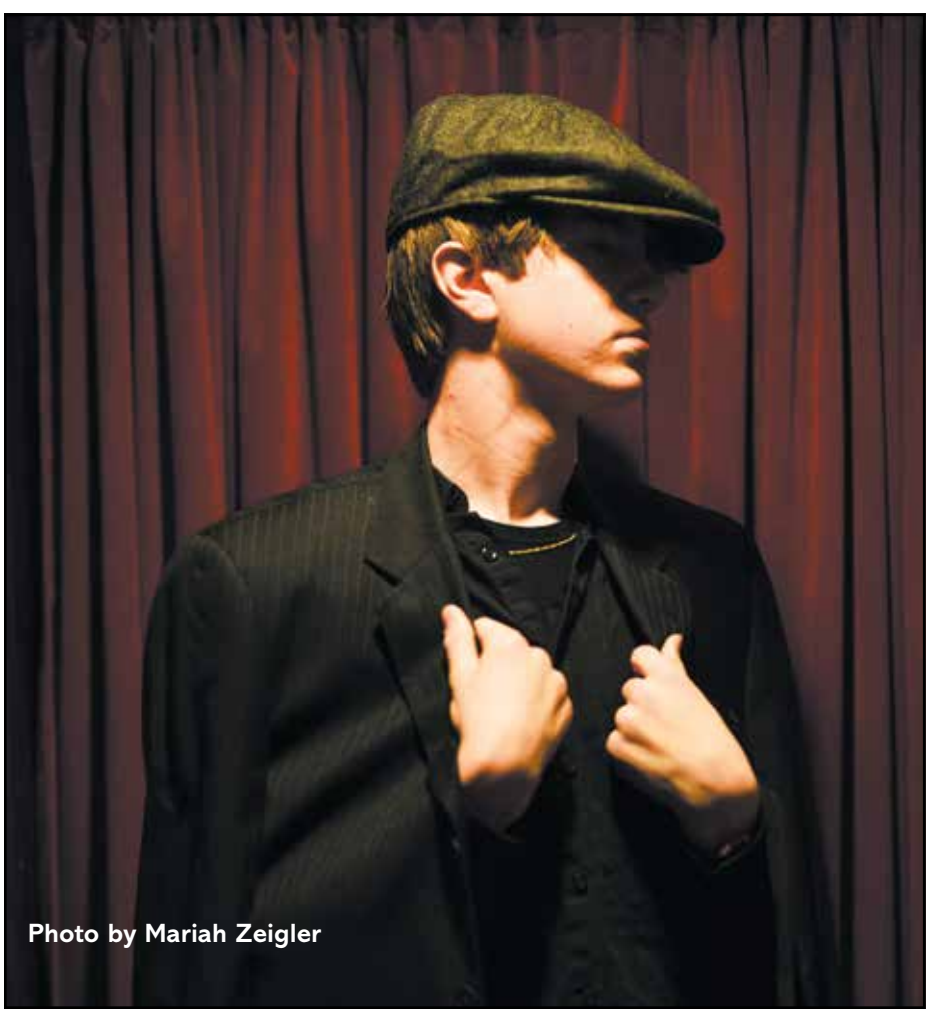


Photo by Mariah Zeigler

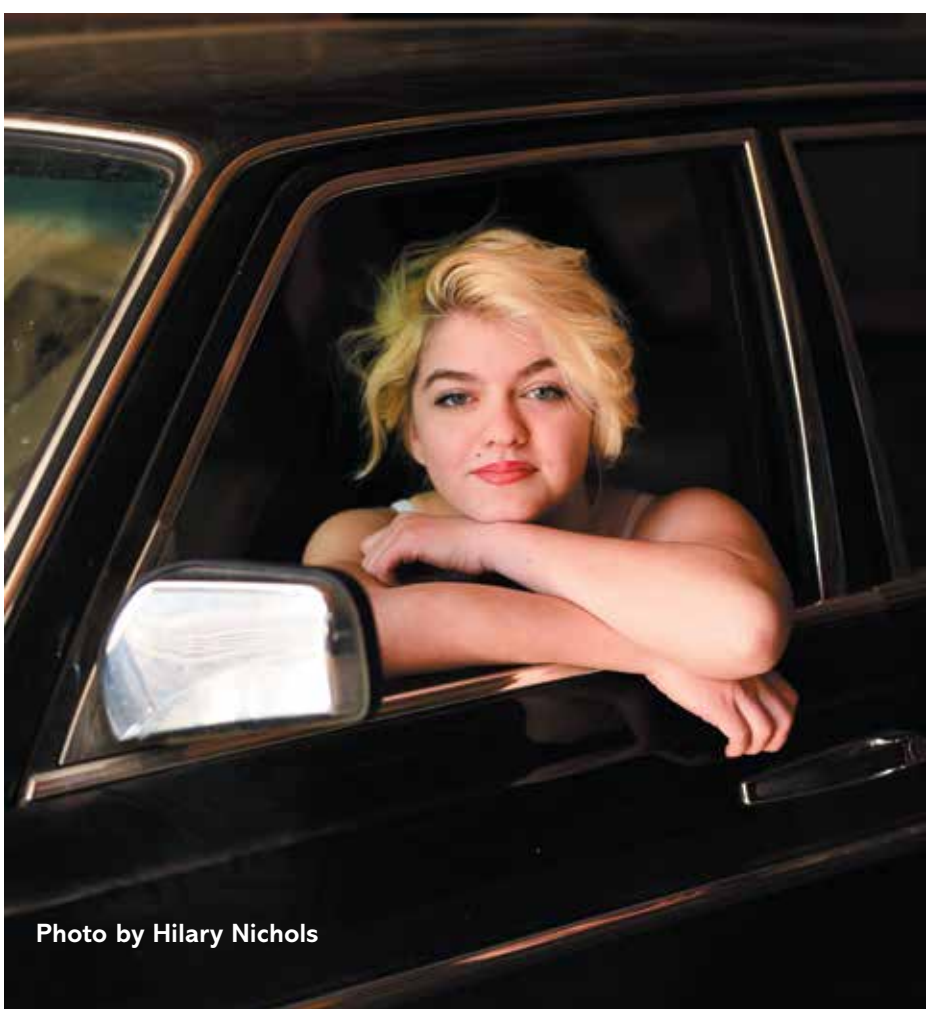


Photo by Hilary Nichols

Photo by Hilary Nichols

Photo by Jack Lewis

semester. It was fun to guide these independent teens to design their own curriculum and schedule the semester of photography outings to meet their interests and grow their skills. Together we explored the streets, parks, and forests with cameras in hand. On rainy days we sourced indoor settings at The Graduate Hotel, Kerrytown, and in-home studios. Together we sought additional instruction from other professionals. Mid-semester these students created, edited, printed, and hung their work at Culture Verse art gallery on Main Street, and then they kept shooting to further their distinct projects and to expand their body of work.

Both Jack and Mariah lit up as they grew their knowledge to control for depth of field for an elegant effect and create their most artistic work. But more than the basic exposure triangle, I was much more gratified as they grew their excitement and passion for self-expression.

Both Jack and Mariah lit up as they grew their knowledge to control for depth of field for an elegant effect and create their most artistic work. But more than the basic exposure triangle, I was much more gratified as they grew their excitement and passion for self-expression. Their semester was complete when they met all of their goals. They published a photo-journalism piece on their experience, and successfully curated their final gallery show and artist reception at Neutral Zone. These two students are now true photographers with an impressive and varied portfolio to be proud of, and they have expanded their perspectives to see their world through the eyes of an artist with the know-how to apply their new tools to any subject they might explore. I am so happy to have been able to guide and inspire these young visionaries and future professionals as they expand their capacities and develop their passions in art and in life.

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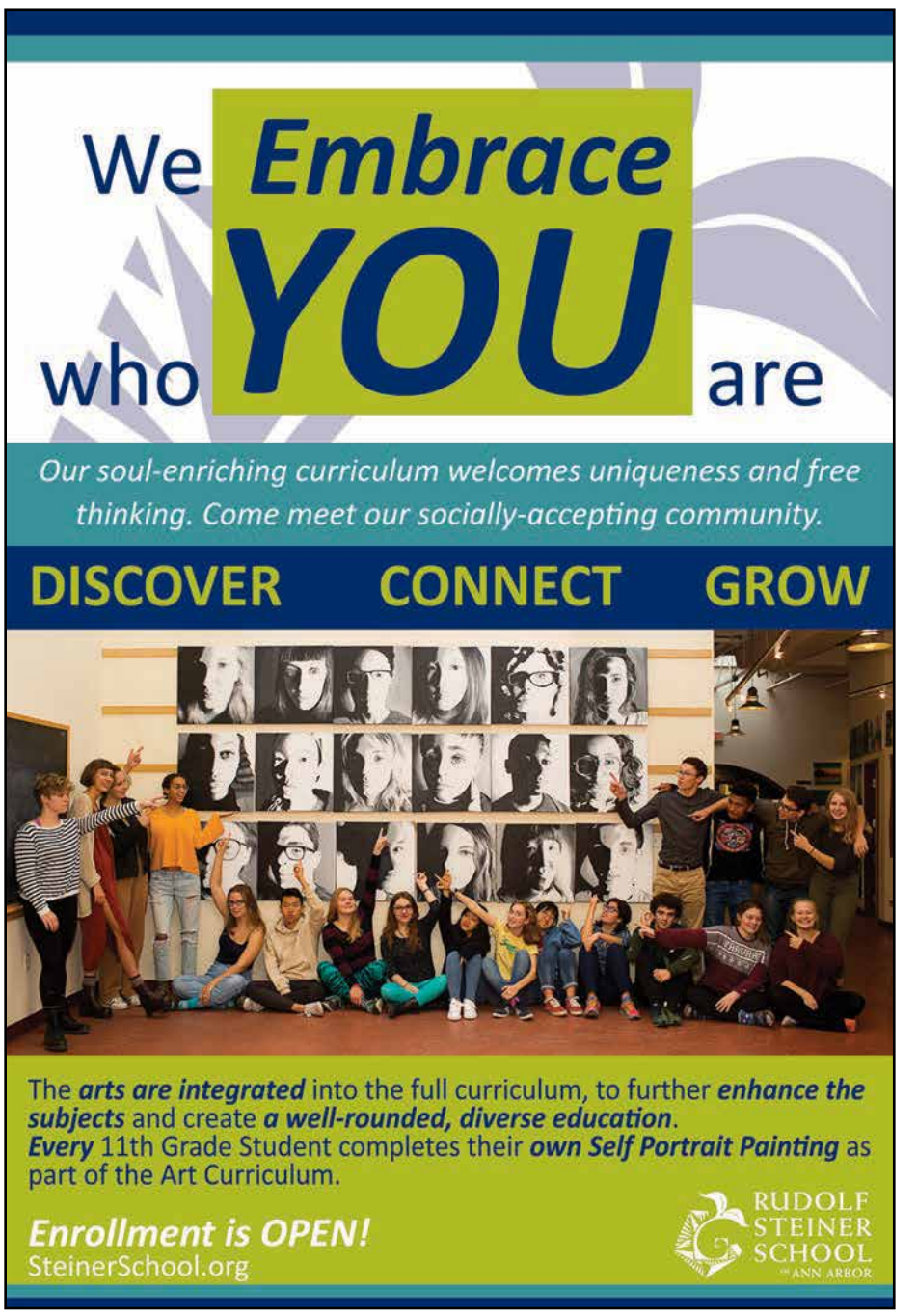
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Conscious Parenting

Prepping for Baby: Find the Right Doula for You

By Katy Gladwin

Families preparing for birth and baby know that there is a ton of work that goes into getting ready for a new little one to join the family.

Preparation takes thought and energy: from getting a space ready for baby, making sure you have what the baby will need, planning postpartum leave, there is much to think about. It often takes until the middle of the pregnancy to even start considering the fact that the baby *will* come out of *your* body!

This thought alone can be overwhelming, and the expectant mom may feel like all of a sudden there is so much *more* preparation to do to feel like she can make informed decisions and have an empowering birth. Knowing what we know about maternity care in the US, I think this reaction makes a lot of sense. Education and support is so important to getting a birth experience that feels good and builds moms up. So, we read the books. We take the classes. We try to become an expert in three months leading up to the birth— which is wonderful and essential to be informed and prepared. When the day comes, while you *can* do this alone, and you *can* count on your partner to do their best, evidence shows that having a doula, a trained labor support person, will increase your satisfaction and feelings of empowerment around your birth (read more at eveidencebasedbirth.com).

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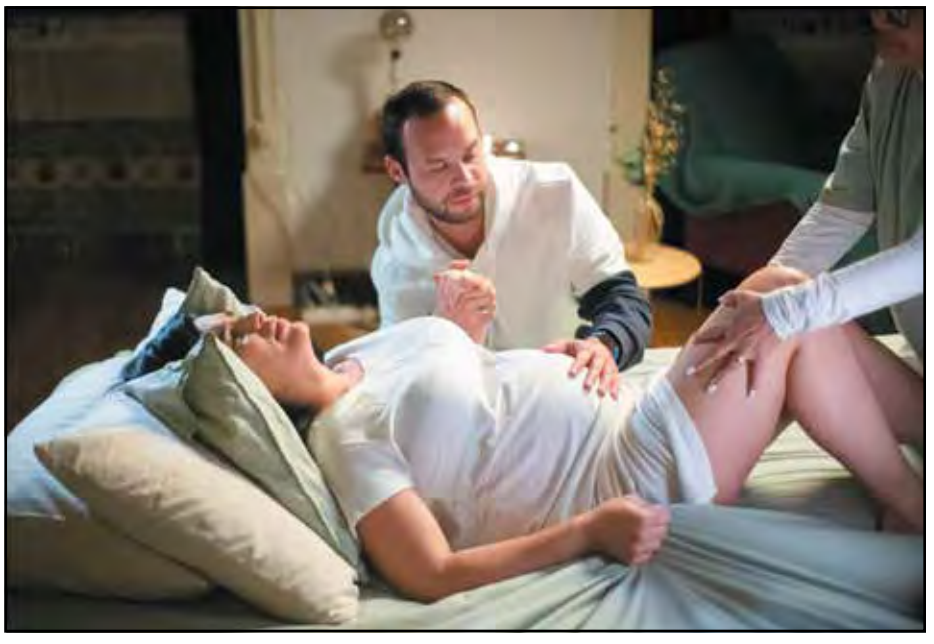
Imagine knowing *all the things,* having a supportive partner, *and* knowing that you don't have to remember everything. Imagine knowing that someone else has eyes out for your best interests without worrying about ulterior motives. Imagine that someone is watching out for your partner as well! It can feel like such a load off your shoulders to know that there is someone there who is familiar with the process.

I have been a doula for 13 years, supporting hundreds of families, and by far the biggest reflection I get from those I've been honored to serve, is that they were able to focus on the work they were doing, whether laboring and giving birth or being a support person. They knew that the extraneous work was taken care of. That their space would be honored and respected. That they could trust their voices were heard, even when they weren't able to speak loudly, or at all in the moment. This is the awesome work I get to do with families.



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So, what does finding *your* doula look like? How do you know you'll make a great fit? Start out scheduling an interview or consult with several different doulas. These will likely be about 30-minute meetings.Show up prepared with questions. These can be specific questions about how they practice, or what they do at births; this can also be questions to get an idea of who they are as a person. I think the way this meeting feels is often more important than the experience or skills of the doula. While you are leaning on this person to help birth go smoothly, the energy they bring into the birth room is the most important thing. You are inviting them into an incredibly sacred and intimate event, so feeling like you're happy and safe to have them there is foremost.

Example questions you might ask:

What is your general philosophy around birth?
What kind of comfort measures do you use most often?
When will you join us in labor?
How long do you stay with us?
How do you advocate for your clients?

There is a doula for everyone, and while getting recommendations from friends who have used a doula is an amazing way to get names and know those doulas are good at their jobs, you really need to make sure that you mesh well with your doula. This is why I suggest always talking to a few doulas—even if you think you know who you will hire. You may be surprised and connect amazingly with a newer doula who you interviewed on a whim (because their energy made you feel safe and at ease).

What might a doula relationship look like?

Most doulas will offer text/phone/email support from the time they are hired. This means you can reach out whenever you have non-medical questions or concerns, or when you have to make decisions and you just want someone to work out all the pros and cons with. If your brain is spinning in the middle of night, drop them a text. If you're heading to your care provider appointment and feel like you want to ask the best questions while there, just call and you can get a list together.

While the evidence is clear that inviting a doula into your birth can increase satisfaction and feelings of empowerment, as well as decrease interventions, this is a very personal choice.

Often there will be scheduled meetings or prenatal visits. During these visits you might discuss what you learned (or didn't learn) in your comprehensive childbirth class, discuss and build a birth-plan—including all your expectations and desires—as well as discuss plan b, c, and d. You may talk about comfort measures, what to expect at the hospital, and what postpartum looks like. This is a lot of information to cover: I find I usually need at least three to four hours to discuss all this stuff, so I'm prepared to best support my clients.

As labor begins, communication will increase and build until in-person support feels best. From that point your doula may join you and often stay until baby

arrives, offering support and advocacy as you do the awesome work of helping your baby be born. This is the time they will be reminding both you and your birth team of your desires, offering comfort measures, and calm support.

Once your baby is born, they continue to hold space for those magical hours as you and your baby get to know each other, continue to advocate, and make sure all your questions and concerns are answered. There is often an organic moment, when leaving feels right, allowing your little family unit to have some quiet, unobserved time, and maybe a really a good nap.

In the days after birth, your doula will continue to be available, to answer questions, normalize newborn antics, notice when things feel abnormal, offer general support, and quickly get you referrals to specialists as needed. Your doula is still available 24/7 for you into those first days, and maybe weeks, as you navigate new parenthood.

While the evidence is clear that inviting a doula into your birth can increase satisfaction and feelings of empowerment, as well as decrease interventions, this is a very personal choice. Having a safe space to birth your baby is paramount. Making sure your doula, any other guests, care providers, and location of birth all feel safe is truly important. This isn't a choice to rush, and I encourage you to spend some time feeling into these decisions and trusting your intuition.

I wish you a beautiful birth.

Katy Gladwin is a Board-Certified Integrative Health Coach for Women, empowering women to regain or learn to trust their wise body and self. She is also a Holistic and Intuitive Birth Doula, Childbirth Educator, and Consultant. She has been supporting and empowering families for 13 years, through education, emotional support, and faith that our bodies know how to heal, if we can just listen. She lives in the woods in Ypsilanti with her partner and two children. You can find her at SacredRootsHealing.org.

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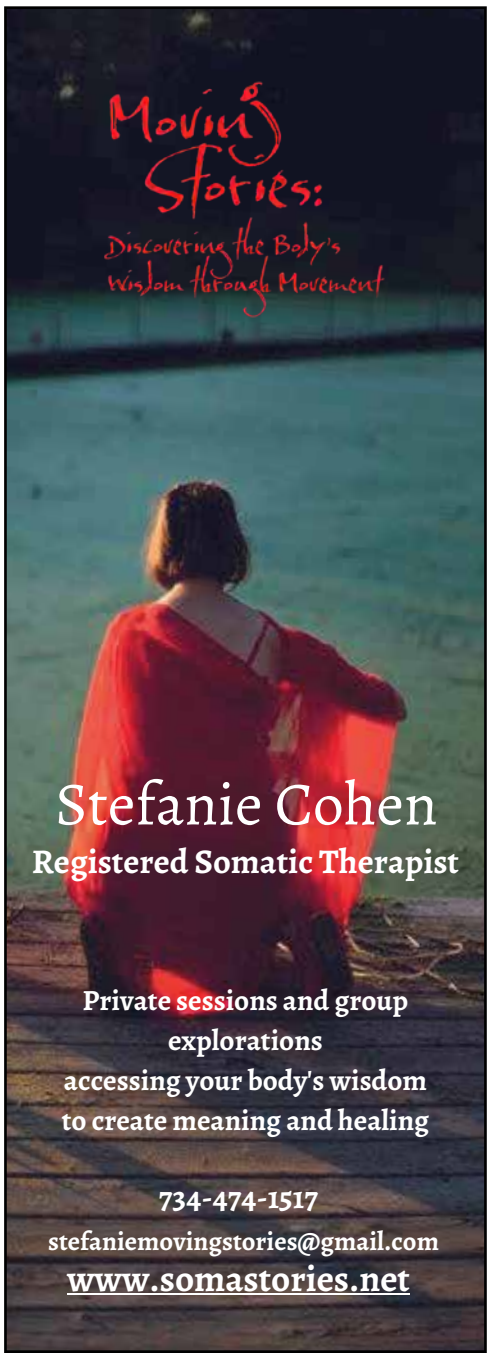

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Kids in the Community

The Voices of Tomorrow's Population

By Christine MacIntyre

In an age where children's voices are easily drowned out by digital noise and societal pressures, nurturing a child's ability to speak up, literally and figuratively, has never been more crucial. Experts and local business owners emphasize the importance of fostering solid vocal skills and self-expression in young people. From techniques to care for growing vocal cords to strategies for building confidence in self-advocacy, a multifaceted approach to "voice development" is shaping a generation of articulate, assertive, and empowered youth. While young people's voices belong to them, parents, educators, and community leaders can play a vital role in amplifying the voices of our future.

Local speech and language pathologist, Kate Jurevicius said that, ultimately, "every child has a voice and deserves to express themselves in whatever way works for them." However, she added that expression looks different for every child.

Science of Young Voices

Developing and fostering young voices is a multifaceted process encompassing both physical and metaphorical aspects. Physically, children's vocal apparatus undergoes significant changes as they grow. The larynx descends, vocal folds thicken, and the brain refines control over the muscles involved in voice production. This leads to a broader range of sounds and better pitch, volume, and tone quality control.

However, some children face difficulties in expressing themselves due to various factors such as oral motor deficits, language challenges, cognitive impairment, autism, anxiety, or stuttering. Jurevicius notes that the severity of communication disorders varies widely, from nonverbal to mild impairments in speech intelligibility or social language.

While developmental milestones exist to better understand when a child is on track or delayed with their peers, Jurevicius says, "There's a wide range of 'normal' for a child's developing communication skills." Key markers of early communication include gestures, pointing, vocalizing, babbling, interaction, first words, and word combinations. Some children may excel in one area of communication (oral, receptive, or social) while lagging in others.

Metaphorically, a young person's "voice"—thoughts, opinions, and worldview—is developed through interactions with their environment. Family dynamics, peer relationships, education, media exposure, and personal experiences also influence this process. As children mature, they learn to articulate their thoughts more clearly often testing different ideas as they explore their identity.

Jurevicius emphasizes that regardless of the type or severity of communication impairment, there's always a way to support a child's growth. She highlights the crucial role of parents and caregivers in implementing effective strategies throughout daily routines. While professional help is valuable, parental involvement is critical to a child's progress, often leading to empowering and magical outcomes. "In the end, every child has a voice and deserves every opportunity to express themselves in whatever way works for them. That won't look the same for every child, and that's okay," she said.

Communicate with Kate
communicatewithkate.com
(734) 531-8551
kate@communicatewithkate.com

The Power of Self-Expression

Having a voice goes far beyond the ability to produce sound; it's a fundamental aspect of human interaction and personal development. A strong voice is closely tied to various crucial skills. Practical conversational abilities allow children to articulate their thoughts, engage in meaningful dialogue, and build relationships. Non-verbal communication, such as body language and facial expressions, complements verbal expression, adding depth and nuance to interactions. Understanding non-literal language, including idioms, metaphors, and sarcasm, enhances a child's ability to navigate complex social situations and appreciate the subtleties of communication. Problem-solving skills are often honed through verbal reasoning and discussion, as children learn to express their ideas, consider alternatives, and work collaboratively.

Perhaps most importantly, a well-developed voice enables children to interpret and express emotions, fostering emotional intelligence and empathy. By nurturing these interconnected aspects of communication, we empower children to speak and truly connect, understand, and make themselves understood in an increasingly complex world.

Community organizations such as the Neutral Zone (NZ) provide a transformative experience where youth develop their voices in many ways. According to their website, the organization is a space "where youth embrace

their power, ignite their creativity, and launch their future to build equity, justice, and collective liberation." NZ Executive Director Lori Roddy said that the youth-driven center embraces practices that support providing youth developmental needs, facilitating opportunities that support intrinsic motivation, and building meaningful youth and adult partnerships.

According to Roddy, NZ strives to provide a safe space where youth voices and ideas are the focus. Their success hinges on the hope that youth feel they belong in and matter to their community, that they have power, and that their talent and creativity are uplifted. "When youth voices [are] supported, youth know that they matter," she said, adding that this is critical in supporting their development as humans, their goals and plans for their future, and how they embrace our community.

Opportunities include programs such as music, self-defense, kitchen arts, singing, creative writing, activism through arts, photography, environmental justice, and many more. Additionally, Future Corps offers youth jobs and technical training as they transition into adulthood. According to their website, students will learn goal setting, plan creation, and personal and academic goal achievement skills.

Up to 50% of the NZ board of directors consists of youth who partner with adults to lead programming, reinforcing youth voices. These youth facilitate programming for peers and gain valuable experience (such as how they interact with adults) that they can carry with them in their everyday lives.

Youth have a right, role, and responsibility to be a part of the community in which they live. Roddy says that NZ's hope is to shine a light on youth and help them believe in their capabilities. She reiterated the importance of community involvement: "We are really only successful when [youth] are a part of our community as more than just recipients but as members with valuable contributions."

Neutral Zone
neutral-zone.org
310 E Washington St, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 214-9995

Hearing and Respecting Youth Voices

Jason Smith, executive director at the Michigan Center for Youth Justice agrees that "empowering young people to have a voice and opportunities to express themselves is very important for their development." He says it can help instill confidence and encourage active participation in their communities and education, leading to better academic performance and social skills.

In the juvenile justice system, Smith says that supporting youth voices can help the healing process by providing a safe space to express feelings and receive support and validation from trusted adults and peers. "When young people lack opportunities to express themselves, they may feel marginalized, which can lead to decreased self-esteem and disengagement from school." Behavioral challenges and involvement in the juvenile justice system can result from youth feeling as though their voice isn't heard or doesn't matter, according to Smith.

He underscores parents, guardians, caregivers, and teachers' vital roles in nurturing and supporting youth voices. "By actively listening to children, showing genuine interest, and validating their feelings, they reinforce that [youth] voices matter." Tactics such as encouragement and positive reinforcement facilitate confidence in thought expression. Smith adds that creating safe spaces—such as family meetings or classroom discussions—allow kids to speak up without fear of judgment. Additionally, he suggested supporting young people's participation in activities like speech therapy or art programs further enhance their ability to articulate thoughts clearly.

Similar to NZ's inclusion of youth in essential roles, Smith says offering leadership opportunities empowers children to use their voices in an impactful way. "By prioritizing and fostering youth voices, we not only support their individual growth but also contribute to a more inclusive, empathetic society."

Michigan Center for Youth Justice
miyouthjustice.org/
3810 Packard Rd., Suite 200A, Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(734) 773-3098

Elevating Stories of Experiences

At Student Advocacy Center (SAC), youth voices are uplifted to impact school policy in local schools, school districts, and even at the state government level. SAC partners with young people to provide a platform that assists with elevating youth stories of school experiences to decision-makers for equitable policy change. Anell Eccleston, Director of Care and Sustainability, says that humans, including students, are the masters of their own life experiences, feelings, and reasoning for actions. He believes that students deserve the opportunity to express their perspectives and feelings about how we can support them best.

Advocates like the people at SAC can prepare students for meetings, teach them how to deliver comments, and prepare them for intense conversations. Regarding policies and practices that impact students more than anyone, Smith believes it's important to involve students in the decision-making process. "The reality is[in order] to have an equitable schooling environment and a culture of responsiveness, student voice is essential in all endeavors."

SAC offers universal, targeted, and intensive support across a continuum of services. Each program has a process of engagement. For example, their statewide helpline receives calls and supports parents and caregivers by phone. Case managers (a.k.a. advocates) can provide more targeted support. Additionally, they offer an intensive education-focused mentoring program. SAC helps students facing many barriers including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion, disabilities, racism, teen pregnancy, homelessness, and immigrant status.

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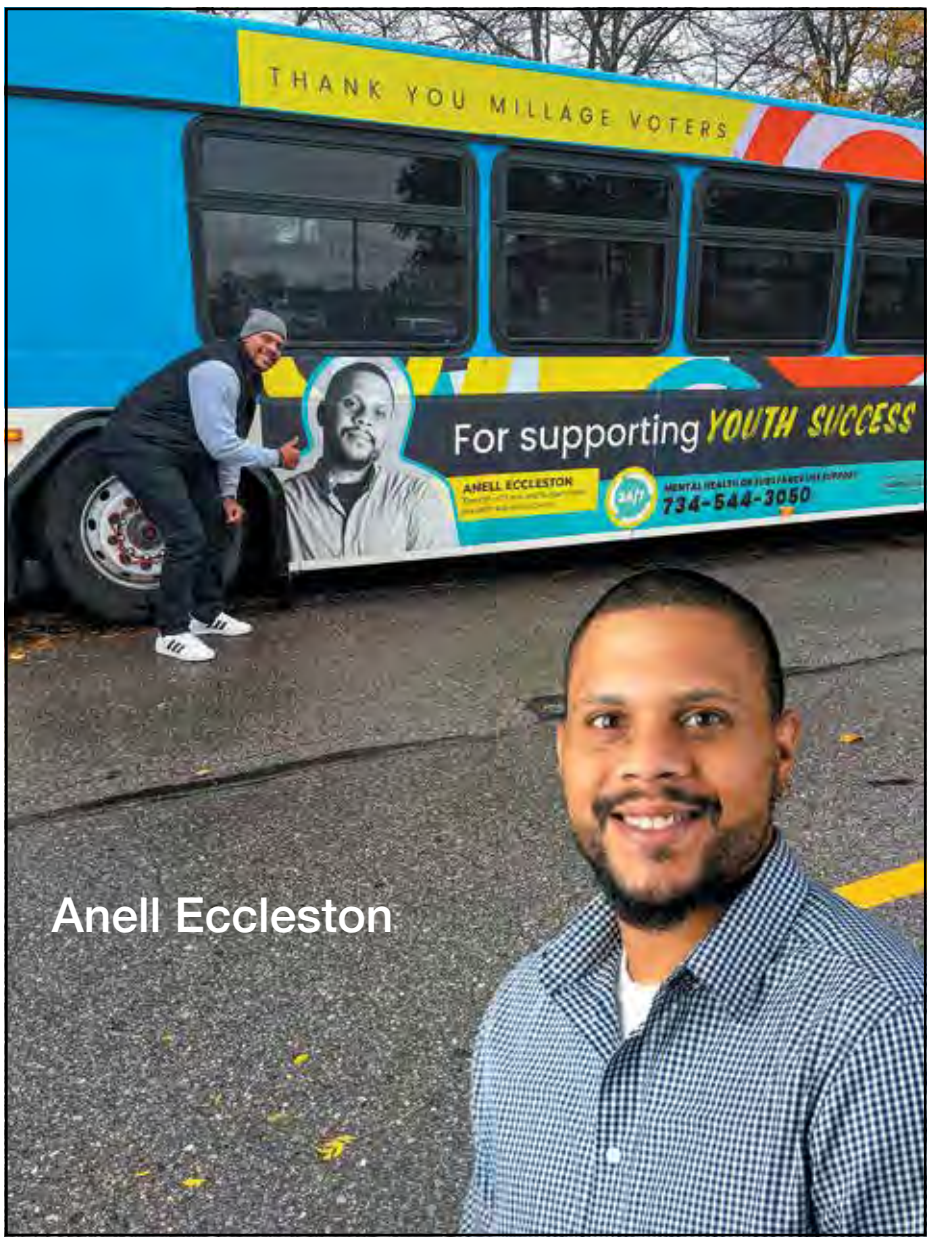
The Voices of Tomorrow's Population



Eccleston says SAC visits schools and recruits students interested in creating concrete changes in their buildings or districts or advocating for state-level changes. He says recruiting in school buildings allows students to refer and recruit their friends and peers who might also be interested in creating educational change. A youth organizer works with youth leaders to educate them on the school-to-prison pipeline and how they can organize to continue improving the spaces they see needing change.

While students come to SAC with a wide variety of concerns, Eccleston offers some examples of significant issues brought to them like the suspension of students for reasons that don't fall within a district's code of conduct and students receiving administrative transfers (i.e., administrators transferring a student into another education program such as virtual learning) without due process. "As students share their experiences with us, we notice that some of the reasons for a school removal are what we consider unjust and not aligning with their codes of conduct." He says this inconsistency is troubling as students and families may not understand that schools can be held accountable too.

SAC advocates believe in the power of storytelling. Students share their thoughts and feelings, and advocates listen and teach students how to share their impactful stories with decision makers. For example, SAC follows an organizing for change model. Calls for action can vary. For example, they might organize an art show that demonstrates what students see in schools or political demonstrations that illuminate the impacts of zero-tolerance practices.

Student Advocacy Center
studentadvocacycenter.org
124 Pearl St., Ste. 504, Ypsilanti, MI 48197
(855) 688-1916

Benefits of Voice Lessons Beyond Singing

Voice lessons teach people how to become better singers, sure, but the benefits of voice lessons transcend singing aptitude. Ann Arbor-based private voice teacher Karen Tenbrink has taught young singers voice lessons for over 25 years. She says the benefits are plentiful. "First, [people] learn to find their voice, that is, how to use their own unique instrument so it can be heard." Outward expression through voice takes courage—something many young people, or anyone, may find intimidating. Being quiet—not talking and especially not singing—guards against vulnerability. Tenbrink says that being brave enough to raise your voice and be noticed can be a powerful lesson in self-confidence.

"Second, knowing how to use their voice allows them to create art which in itself can be a very personal and often therapeutic form of self-expression," she said. Again, introversion is often a safeguard against the outer world, but letting yourself be seen and heard offers immense connections, learning, and self-empowerment opportunities. Tenbrink said that one of the most valuable lessons young singers learn is that they *have* a voice that *should* be heard. "Singing is often a way for shy children to express themselves and, from there, to speak. If you can sing it, you can *say* it!"

Singing enriches connection with others. Tenbrink explained that it is often an intangible emotional experience that kids can share with audience members or even co-performers, "thus building community." She said that singing is an accessible art form for most children—one that offers a deeply personal and satisfying way of making music that they can carry with them anywhere, anytime.

Additionally, Tenbrink underscores the importance of awareness. "In singing, being aware of breathing is very important." She added that this carries over to stressful situations, such as class presentations or tests. "The deep abdominal breathing we use for singing can be applied in those moments to control nerves."

She hopes that every child can learn to sing and, in doing so, discover the value of their voice and reap the benefits it provides. She prefers to teach singers private lessons beginning in middle school. She recommended that, prior to that, the Ann Arbor Youth Chorale and the Boychoir of Ann Arbor are great examples of children's choirs kids can join prior to beginning private lessons.

For voice opportunities in Ann Arbor check out Boychoir of Ann Arbor at aaboychoir.org or the Ann Arbor Youth Chorale at annarboryouthchorale.org.

Books Relevant to Youth Voice

***Say Something!* by Peter H. Reynolds**

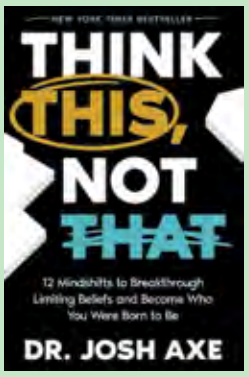
This book emphasizes the importance of all voices, not just the most prominent ones. It highlights the diverse methods of expression available to everyone ranging from creative arts to personal acts of kindness. The pages are packed with vibrant, inclusive illustrations of children, making the concept approachable and universally relevant.

***The School for Invisible Boys* by Shaun David Hutchinson**

This book follows a sixth-grade boy who, struggling with bullying at home and school, discovers he can turn invisible and enter a mysterious realm. This world, while an escape from his daily troubles, is filled with dangerous creatures that feed on isolation and anxiety. He befriends another invisible boy; together, they must overcome these supernatural threats. The story combines eerie elements with touching character development, exploring themes of self-acceptance and resilience.

***Starfish* by Lisa Fipps**

This book is about an 11-year-old girl who, subjected to years of weight-related bullying, lives by self-imposed rules to minimize her presence. This poetic narrative follows her path to self-acceptance as she discovers her true worth and finds her voice. Supported by family, friends, and professional help, she learns to embrace her unique qualities. Her story of personal growth offers hope to anyone struggling with self-esteem issues, demonstrating that voices matter regardless of size, gender, socioeconomic status, or other differences.

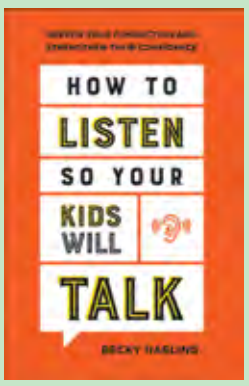


***Think This, Not That:12 Mindshifts to Breakthrough Limiting Beliefs and Become Who You Were Born to Be* by Dr. Josh Axe**

While this book is geared toward adults, it could make an excellent tool for adults who want to foster and support youth voices. It teaches how to cultivate self-awareness and develop a growth mindset. Examples of mindset shifts include "Don't simply drift; clarify your purpose" and "Don't live by popular opinion; follow enduring principles of wisdom." The lessons in this book can easily be tailored to youth, helping them live to their full potential and overcome their limiting vices.

***How to Talk to Anyone: Master Small Talk, Improve Your Social Skills, and Build Meaningful Relationships* by Marcus Smith**

This book is part of a series of How to Talk books. All of the books in the series are great, but I find this particular one especially useful for general communication skills. It teaches a lot about communicating and connecting with others, including how to start a conversation, improve social skills, have deeper conversations, master small talk, and avoid common communication mistakes. Arming youth, particularly older teens and young adults, with these valuable tools will go far—in their education, career, relationships, and more.



***How to Listen so Your Kids Will Talk: Deepen Your Connection and Strengthen Their Confidence* by Becky Harling**

This book is for parents and caregivers. It underscores the value of good communication and sets kids up for their future relationships by building a firm foundation where their voice is valued and heard. The book highlights strategies to transform relationships and empower children's unique voices. This practical book is ideal for parents with kids from preschool through high school.

Family-Friendly Games That Boost Communication Skills

Talk It Out: ***A Therapeutic Board Game Designed to Encourage Teens to Communicate***

This game encourages teens to open up, allowing them to discuss family, friends, feelings, values, dreams, and hopes. According to its description, Talk It Out is a fun game that poses thought-provoking and imaginative questions suitable for teens.

LetzTalk: ***Communication Cards to Build Confidence & Emotional Intelligence***

This therapy tool is geared for ages five to eight but is appropriate for kids and adults to play together as a family. The cards include 60 age-appropriate questions that provoke deep thought and insight. The open-ended questions encourage kids to formulate detailed answers that discourage simple "yes" or "no" answers. The cards focus on social and emotional learning that helps develop communicative skills and builds confidence as kids and teens.

Chat Chains: ***The Game That Connects Us***

Chat Chains is a conversation-starting game designed by two psychologists. The 150 topics inspire players to share feelings with friends and family, fostering improved communication skills that help with making friends, initiating conversions, and feeling more connected to others. This game claims to be autism, ADHD, and social anxiety-friendly too.

Guess in 10

This one isn't your typical communication-building game, but I love guessing games for prompting communication. They teach critical thinking skills, forming thoughts before speaking, and asking the right questions—all communication components. The game encourages players to talk aloud without making it feel forced.

Links to Other Resources

Youth Funding Youth Ideas at yfyi.org.

10 Practices to Support Youth Voice - National Youth Leadership Council at nylc.org/10-practices-to-support-youth-voice

Youth Voice Initiative Share-out and Discussion: Out-of-School Time Monthly Field Convening at youtube.com/watch?v=4ZnHO1t6fDE

Why Is Youth Empowerment Important? - Boys & Girls Clubs of America https at bgca.org/news-stories/2021/September/why-is-youth-empowerment-important/

Empowering Youth Voice and Decision-Making - Youth in Progress at youthinprogress.org/resources/topics/empowering-youth-voice-and-decision-making/

Empowering Youth: Building a Strong Foundation For Tomorrow at researchgate.net/publication/373941894_EMPOWERING_YOUTH_BUILDING_A_STRONG_FOUNDATION_FOR_TOMORROW

All Creatures Great & Small

The Decision

By Robin Grant

Dogs have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Their unconditional love has provided a lifeline of emotional support during some very dark times. In the aftermath of a failed relationship and a thoroughly broken heart, being accountable to my dogs, and needing to care for them, literally gave me a reason to get up and carry on living. I was struggling with a very bad episode of depression—the kind that comes with such crushing, completely debilitating fatigue that it's nearly impossible to get out of bed.

In the aftermath of a failed relationship and a thoroughly broken heart, being accountable to my dogs, and needing to care for them, literally gave me a reason to get up and carry on living.

To me, dogs are the embodiment of joy—there are few things I enjoy more than watching dogs play. Their ability to be completely in the now is a great reminder to be present; they are absolute masters of being here, now. I believe that this is part of their mission: To remind us that we do not have an infinite amount of time in this life, and that the ticking of the clock is steady, relentless, and unbeatable. It's always cause for sadness for me when I notice the "senior slowdown" in one of my dogs—the increasing amount of white hair on the face, cloudiness in the eyes, changes in mobility, and time spent in deep sleep. They are all signals that things are winding down, and soon I will no longer have this loving presence in my life.

Because my attachment to my dogs is as deep as it is to humans who are dear to me (and in most cases, actually deeper) the death of one of my dogs is always cause for massive heartbreak and grief. Having my "heart dog" Titus put to sleep caused me nearly as much emotional pain and grief as my father's death did—and I was close to my dad. It's been more than six years since Titus was put to sleep, and I still cannot look at pictures of him, think too much about him, or talk about him without an immediate surge of grief and welling of tears in my eyes. My dogs are the chosen family members I spend each day with; they are there for me through thick and thin. When I look into their eyes, I see only love, never judgment nor criticism. I look at it like this: All the love and joy a dog has given me throughout our years together gets compressed into an equivalent amount of grief and sadness when that dog dies. It's kind of like the difference between doing a long, slow, uphill climb—the kind of gradual hill that you barely even register, and can only really see how high you've gotten when you're further along the path—and a short, steep hill, where you have to work much harder and quicker, and are huffing and puffing by the time you reach the summit. Chronic love, acute grief.

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I've been lucky that most of my dogs have lived relatively long lives. I was actually spared having to make The Decision for my first two. If you're a pet owner, you know the decision I'm talking about. Thanks to modern veterinary medicine, we have the means to give our pets a painless, easy death, and I believe that as pet owners (or, if you prefer, guardians), it is our responsibility to do so. It is the final act of love we can give the pets we are in partnership with. I've had to make The Decision four times, and it's been excruciating every time. My brain knows that it's better to do this sooner rather than later, before pain and suffering become too great. But, my heart always lags behind in part because I know how much I'm going to miss them, and I want just a little more time.

Teddy, my first Boston Terrier, died in his sleep at age nine probably due to complications from the epilepsy he'd had since puppyhood. Lucy, my second Boston, died on the operating table during an acute episode of pancreatitis, at 10. Thayrone, my Rhodesian Ridgeback, was the first dog I had to put to sleep. He had topped out at about 100 pounds, but degenerative myelopathy, kind of like multiple sclerosis, had caused so much muscle wasting and atrophy of his hind end that he was only 75 pounds when put to sleep at 11. His regular vet came to my house and did the procedure on my bed—Thayrone's absolute favorite place in the house. We found out about Lap of Love, a nationwide network of veterinarians who specialize in palliative care and in-home euthanasia, when we discovered that Titus, my 11-year-old boxer/terrier mix, had a massive, inoperable tumor over his kidneys. With assistance from a Lap of Love veterinarian, Titus had a very peaceful passing on a dog bed in my living room. Teeka, my 13-year-old Boston/pug mix, had degenerative disc disease which caused increasingly acute bouts of pain and semi-paralysis that eventually were uncontrollable even with mega doses of steroids and painkillers. This was during Covid times, so the Lap of Love vet came to our backyard and put Teeka to sleep on my lap.

I think many of us, if we think about death at all, believe that the ideal death is dying in your sleep—just slip away during the night, easy-peasy (the ultimate Irish goodbye!). Most of us are not that lucky, though, and this kind of peaceful, intervention-free passing is as rare for our pets as it is for us.

Last summer, it became clear that we were approaching The Decision time with Lady, our 13-year-old beagle. She was effectively deaf, on her way to being blind, and was developing the equivalent of doggie dementia; she had also started having increasing amounts of potty accidents (including pooping in her sleep on my bed). The massive cyst that suddenly appeared on her left flank in a place that would have been very difficult to bandage and manage during healing was the tipping point. The wait time for both a Lap of Love appointment, and for our regular vet to do an in-home euthanasia, was longer than we wanted to wait given the problems the cyst was causing, so we made an appointment with our regular vet to do the euthanasia there. Lady hated riding in the car, and we live very close to our vet's office now, so on a beautiful July morning, we walked to the vet's office, then sat on the floor with her one last time. It was as peaceful as possible given the setting.

I think many of us, if we think about death at all, believe that the ideal death is dying in your sleep—just slip away during the night, easy-peasy (the ultimate Irish goodbye!). Most of us are not that lucky, though, and this kind of peaceful, intervention-free passing is as rare for our pets as it is for us. While still excruciating, it has gotten slightly easier for me to make the decision for euthanasia with each dog, as I've been better able with age and wisdom to see clearly what is best for them rather than just focusing on what's best for me. I now believe it is better to err on the side of "too soon" rather than "too late." It's not so much about ending suffering, but about preventing any suffering in the first place.

Robin Grant started her pet sitting company, Peaceable Pets Animal Care, in Ann Arbor in 2004. She moved to Chelsea in 2023, where she continues to provide visits for pets in their homes and provides dog daycare and boarding for a small number of dogs in her home. When she's not caring for pets, you might find Robin singing in the Ann Arbor area with spark (find them on Facebook at @A2spark), a tight, high-energy four-piece band that plays a wide range of mainly uptempo, mostly happy, highly danceable pop/rock covers. She can be reached at robin@peaceablepets.com, or visit her online at facebook.com/Peaceable Pets.

The Transforming Power of Gratitudes

By Lisa Wolfe

Consider waking up in the morning and the only thing in your awareness is what you're grateful for. A smile comes to your lips as you look out the window and see the colors in the light of the new day. You're grateful for each little thing often unnoticed by others. You are in the stillness where gratitude can move through your life. You have a glimpse that you *are* the stillness *of* gratitude.

Similarly, consider a time when you go to sleep at night, bathed in thoughts of gratitude as you are immersed in the smell of the freshly cut grass wafting through your window. You feel the breeze over your body. You know the moonlight is creating shadows over the landscape outside. You hear the far-off call of the owl in a slow and steady rhythm. Feel your mind become still and quiet as you drift off.

Such are the ordinary mercies of each day and the gratitude that connects us to them. How does the world express gratitude to you? How does your mind move into awareness when you are alone?

Such are the ordinary mercies of each day and the gratitude that connects us to them. How does the world express gratitude to you? How does your mind move into awareness when you are alone?

Gratitude is an ever-present gift that brings us into our own presence in the stillness of the moment. Consider these things: the first morning bird song which is calling the day to begin, the light in your loved one's eyes, the sound of your child's sleeping breath, or the softness of your dog resting on your foot. It might be as simple as your slippers waiting by your bed or a blanket that keeps you warm. There are ten thousand such gifts a minute if we let ourselves see them.

Thomas Merton said, "One of the most important—and most neglected—elements in the beginnings of an interior life is the ability to respond to reality, to see the value and the beauty in ordinary things, to come alive to the splendor that is all around us."

These days, research shows there are many positive effects of gratitude. A short list includes improving emotional and physical health, sleep, decreasing aggression, increasing empathy, communication, self- esteem, and mental strength.

It's really very simple. Gratitude is a gift that gives of itself, if we only recognize it. It's always there waiting, bringing more peace and happiness, helping us care for our essential selves. It is always available, no matter the situation or how impossible our outer circumstances might seem. Gratitude can be found in the worst of all challenges, where still we have our bodies working, our internal system calling us to enter the lessons of love, bringing us to the interconnectedness with life. Gratitude helps us find the present moment which is already ours, and we see we are fully alive. The power of gratitude is readily available when we find ourselves on the mountain top or in the deep valley of life, revealing its beauty. It helps develop confidence and a quiet dignity within ordinary life, transforming us into who we are in our true essence.

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The practice of gratitudes is a simple way of discovering the life-affirming world around and within you. This gratitude in-action can help us find new habits and patterns.

Happiness and complaint can't live at the same time. Gratitude means nothing to a lot of people within our often busy, self-focused world. It's easy to identify with unhappiness right up until it becomes a habit. However, there's another way of seeing things. The practice of gratitudes is a simple way of discovering the life-affirming world around and within you. This gratitude in-action can help us find new habits and patterns. It can help us shape our lives in new ways. Gratitudes can bring us to the bright star of peace within, as life is busy growing us up into who we are meant to be. It helps us know who we are by putting us in touch with the rhythm of the natural world. It helps softens our suffering. It's an inside thing—Personal and profound.

Gratitude brings wisdom in the good times and bad. This simple perspective can become a natural part of who we are and a reliable friend in the quiet of night. Developing this simple perspective brings us to our natural state. It empowers and strengthens us letting our natural wonder take hold. Gratitude puts us in touch with the source of life, reflecting life's purity through our internal thankfulness.

Much of the world focuses on what's wrong, painful, where a downward trajectory of thoughts perpetuates more of the same, leading to the land of the dead end of living. The power of gratitudes can change our lives. It makes us kinder, gentler It enriches our relationship with ourselves.

Much of the world focuses on what's wrong, painful, where a downward trajectory of thoughts perpetuates more of the same, leading to the land of the dead end of living. The power of gratitudes can change our lives. It makes us kinder, gentler It enriches our relationship with ourselves. It helps us become more aware of all that we have, no matter how little it may seem in comparison to others. Challenges are a necessary part of our awakening heart. The world is creative and ready to help us as we provide a place for it —a personal space. The practice of gratitudes makes us more able to break the cycle of negativity and establish the good that is available within as we navigate our lives through our troubled and beautiful world.

Lisa Wolfe, RN, MSN, CNM, DipPSH, DipIC is trained internationally in healing arts of Pure Spiritual Healing, Animal Healing, and Intuitive Counseling. She is a member of the American Holistic Nursing Association, a Board-Certified Member of the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork, and is a Sevalight Associate. She has a private holistic care practice and is a writer and photographer. She lives in northern Michigan. She provides appointments via Zoom and travels for in-person seminars by request. Learn more about Wolfe's practice at LisaWolfeHolisticCare.com.

Handcrafting Column

Autumn Wild Crafting

Written and illustrated by Karen Quinn

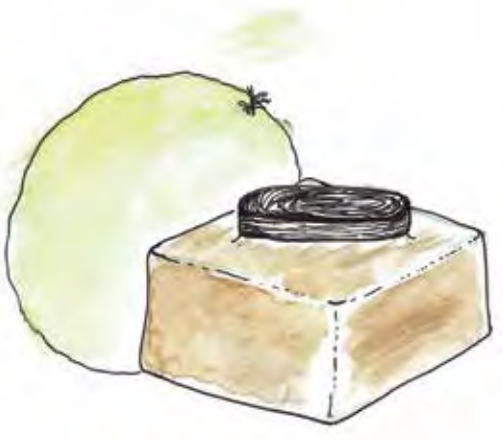
Autumn is the season of bounty, and it's so easy to end up coming home after a wander into the natural spaces around us with pocket loads of natural treasures. Why not engage in some creative crafting with your harvest? Here are a few of my favorite autumn wild crafts to make the most of your gathering.

Black Walnut Ink

If you find yourself along a trail littered with these citrus-looking fruits, gather a few of them up and try making your very own ink! I find I only need about ten walnuts for a nice, small batch. Make sure they are yellowish-brown and well-bruised, but take care when putting them in a pocket. The tannin, or *black ink,* they weep will stain your clothes. I suggest putting them in a basket or a bag to transport them home. The hulling process is outlined in the Fall Foraging article on page XX, so check there for that step-by-step process, and be sure to take note of the preservation methods for the nuts. You'll already have them, so you might as well eat them!

Supplies:

- An enamel or steel pot: *Don't use a pot you cook food in! Once used, this pot will become your ink pot or "experiment pot" as I call it.*
- Cheese cloth, sieve, or fine mesh strainer; *Again, don't reuse it for cooking food.*
- Bucket: *you can reuse the bucket that held your husks after hulling them.*
- Paper and paintbrush: *for testing the ink as it darkens.*
- Ingredients:
- 10-20 black walnut husks
- Baking soda
- Water
- Clove Buds



Once you have the husks, take stock of how much you seem to have and find a pot that you don't mind using for experiments (you shouldn't use it for food again). If you don't have an *experiment pot*, a quick pop over to your local thrift store will do the trick. Once you have chosen your new ink-making pot, add the husks to the pot and cover them with water. Add a teaspoon of baking soda to help the husks release the tannins that make the ink. Bring the pot to a gentle boil, then turn the heat to low. Let it boil for about five minutes, then turn off the heat, and let the hulls steep for at least one hour up to overnight, uncovered. Test the ink after an hour. If you want a darker ink, simply let it sit longer. Once you have reached your desired color saturation, place the cheese cloth, sieve, or strainer over the bucket and pour the contents of the pot through. Then, transfer the ink into jars. I add about five clove buds to each ink jar to help keep it from molding.

I love using my homemade inks as watercolor pigments in my paintings. If you want a range of color, you can pour the ink off at different steep times to get variations in the pigment as well. Happy experimenting!

Pinecone Bird Feeders

There is nothing I love more than a warm cup of tea as I watch the birds at my bird feeders in the morning. So, naturally, one of my favorite autumn crafts is for the birds! As I wander the forests each autumn, I always come across pinecones that can be used for these quick, fun feeders. I like to choose cones that are a little larger (more surface area means more seeds and bigger birds!) and "open" meaning the scales are spread out. Once you've procured your perfect cones, it's time to craft.

Supplies:

- Pinecones; *large, open scaled*
- Peanut butter: *I have used smooth and chunky, both work great.*
- Bird seed: *I use a wild songbird mix*
- Twine or string
- Scissors: *to cut the twine/ string*
- A plate or cookie sheet; *for a work surface*
- A bowl: *to hold your birdseed*
- A butter knife: *for spreading the peanut butter*

Now, I've seen some sites telling you to bake your cones, but that is absolutely unnecessary. Baking kills any bugs or fungus so you don't end up with a moldy garland or a bug eruption from your natural potpourri, but birds love eating bugs, so just let them be.

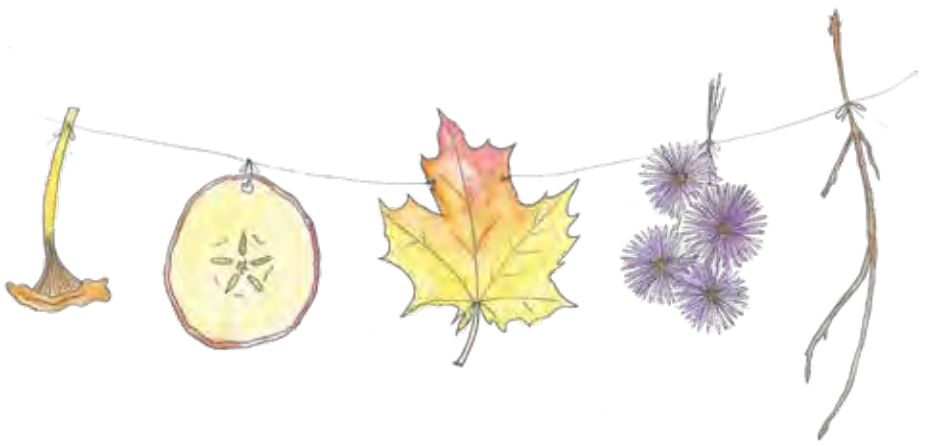
Prepare your space before you start the project to keep the peanut butter explosion to a minimum. Put your supplies on a table and pour your bird seed into the bowl. This makes the flow of creation much smoother and cleaner.

Our first step is to tie the twine or string to the top of the cones. I tend to tie all the cones before I start working with the peanut butter. I usually tie a slip knot and weave it through the top few scales and make a knot at the rachis (top of the cone), leaving a large loop on the top. But it really doesn't matter how you do it, so long as the cord is secure and the loop at the top is large enough to use as a hanger.

Now comes the fun and messy part—coating the cone in peanut butter. I personally put my peanut butter right on my work surface and roll my cone in it for the first goopy layer. Then I use the knife to add or move the peanut butter around, so it gets a good, even coating. Again, it doesn't really matter how it happens, so long as the end product is an evenly coated pinecone. The more peanut butter there is on the cone, the longer the feeder will last and the more seed you can stick to it. More seed equals more bird watching fun.

Once you are happy with your peanut butter application, simply roll the pinecone in the bowl of seed. You can add seed into specific areas by hand to fill it out.

Last step (after cleaning up, of course!) is to hang your homemade feeders out for your bird friends to enjoy! There's no right or wrong way to hang them, but I do keep in mind the bird's safety when I place them, making sure to hang them in a slightly covered area so they aren't out in the open for raptors to snatch up while their guard is down. There is also the fun game of *Squirrel Keep-Away* to consider, so trying to hang them in a way that doesn't lend itself to squirrel shenanigans is also encouraged. But, most importantly, hang them somewhere you can enjoy the show as your bird friends enjoy the fruits of your labors.



Natural Garlands

This may be, far and away, my favorite craft for displaying my autumnal treasures. All you need is your favorite gathering basket, your favorite wandering path, the bounty of the season, and a length of cording to create memorable decorations each time you wander the natural world.

As you walk, pick up literally everything that makes you happy. Colorful fallen leaves, nuts, seed pods, mushrooms, small stones, pieces of wood and bark, fruits, flowers, bones, shells, you name it! Just pop them into your basket and when you've finished your wanderings, head home for craft time.

Supplies:

- Cording: *this can be any kind of natural cording or rope. Just make sure it will break down over time and doesn't contain plastics or dyes.*
- Scissors

Now let's get creative! If you have a large, blunt embroidery needle that you can fit your thread through, this makes the process of garland creation fairly simple. Once you have thread your needle, you can "stitch" your treasures onto your cord. If you don't have a needle, a nail or any other sharp object will work to punch holes into your supplies to thread your cord through. Make your garland as dense or sparse as you like, what's important is you enjoy it. If you want to keep your treasures in certain spots on the cord, tie a knot on either side of it so it doesn't slide around.

Get creative! If you found a stone you liked, try wrapping it in the cord or a thin wire and then hanging it from the main strand. Shells and bones can be attached in the same manner. You can tie cinnamon sticks onto the garland, as well as dried slices of oranges and apples to make a tasty garland that can go outside to feed the wildlife in your yard. It also makes for a lovely garland that will lend itself to the festive decorations of the winter season as well. The best part is, once you're finished with your garland, you can remove any treasures you want to keep and release the rest back into nature.

Happy Crafting!

Karen Quinn is a writer and artist who homesteads on a rural urban farm in Livonia, Michigan with her husband, son, and menagerie of animals. Her favorite things are napping, exploring, and drinking tea.

Crazy Wisdom Kids

An ongoing section of
The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

Articles, calendar listings, advertisements, music and book reviews, and other features that focus on raising conscious and spirited kids.

If you like our CW Kids section, and would like to contribute to it, contact jennifer@crazywisdom.net.
We welcome story ideas, illustrations, feature writing, and photographs.

Now Hiring: Ad Sales Associate
Crazy Wisdom Community Journal is looking for an Ad Sales Associate. This is a great job for someone who is looking for very part-time work from home (and around town), loves Crazy Wisdom and the Crazy Wisdom Journal, and is happily interwoven into the Ann Arbor area. This could be perfect for someone who naturally makes friends and has relationships and connections from daily living here: shopping, playdates with kids or pets, taking dance or yoga classes, attending events, going out to eat, belonging to various singing, religious, reading, or athletic groups in the area—just being an active part of the community!
The job averages 6 hours per week (with an ebb and flow during our 4-month publishing cycle). Help to maintain our print/digital advertising base and build it up. Experience in sales, especially Ad Sales, would be a great plus, though the right attitude is even more important.
$25 per hour base pay, plus solid commission fees above a certain level of ad revenue. Room to grow the base pay (and the commisions).
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Please send cover note, and resume to:
billz@crazywisdom.net.

Green Living

Foraging and Using Natural Materials for Home Crafting

By Deanne Bednar

Nature provides a variety of inspiring materials that can be useful for crafting traditional and useful things. What a joy it is to learn, year by year, a bit more about the qualities of the natural world by foraging and co-creating with nature.

Creating With the Earth Itself

Foraged clay and/or sand subsoil can be shaped to be an earth oven, an interior or exterior wall, a bench, and so many other useful things. Subsoil can be used as an earthen plaster over strawbale walls, or even over an existing wall in a conventional house. Earthen sculptures can emerge from the walls...a niche or shelf, a visual representation of a mountain or tree. Free-standing works of art can be sculpted into a frog, a finger labyrinth, or a model of a future house or hut. Stones, sticks, seed pods, and other nature items can be embedded to add interest. There are limitless opportunities for creating with this media.

Free-standing works of art can be sculpted into a frog, a finger labyrinth, or a model of a future house or hut.

Gathering the materials, mixing, and considerations for use

Gather: Dig away the topsoil to find the subsoil below. It is usually, at least where I live, a lighter color and composed mainly of sand and clay. I like to do a few simple tests to see how it's going to perform as a sculpting or building material.

Test: Worm test. A small amount of subsoil the size of a marble can be wet enough to bend over your finger. If it bends, there is clay. If you can feel grit, there is sand! Then make a test ball or shape about 1-2 inches across, and let it dry completely. Does the surface hold strong? Is it quite strong in compression strength when I try to break it? Another test could be to try making a sample of how it will actually be used.

Mix: I usually screen the soil through a ½" screen for bigger forms (like a bench or earth oven) or a 1/8" screen for smaller sculptures and earth plaster. A ¼" screen can be used for things in between. The goal is to have an aggregate that is big enough to be strong and structural, yet small enough to work for your particular project. Water is added to a consistency which works for the application. I usually mix the water and subsoil in a wheelbarrow or on a tarp.

I usually harvest the dormant plant, and I also like to just try out a variety of things throughout the year that might "cord."

Cording with Natural materials

I like to make corded string or twine by twisting a strand around itself, then twisting it around another strand. These two "double twisted" strands can be quite strong, depending on the material used, and there are many materials that can be used for this cording technique. It is quite hard to describe, but quite easy to do. There is a great video on Youtube (youtube.com/watch?v=6YLAlg3mgo). I mostly make a strong cord for my glasses, bracelets, and small rope to tie up things like sage and lavender bundles.

Gather:
I usually harvest the dormant plant, and I also like to just try out a variety of things throughout the year that might "cord." The qualities I am looking for in a plant material that will work for cording is that it is "strong when dry," and the fiber has some length...at least a few inches, but hopefully much longer than that.

Process:
Dogbane (in the milkweed family) is one of my favorite cording materials. Harvest when the plant is dormant and dry...in the fall, winter, or following spring. You'll know it's dormant because the leaves fall off and the stalks are dark brownish purple. There might still be long, thin pods still attached with silky white milkweed "down." I cord with the inner bark of dogbane, and there are various ways to remove the outer bark, which is stiff, like shellac. The inside "pithy layer" is discarded. (But I bet we could come up with a use for it, right?)

Daylily leaves are a material I'm also fond of using to cord. I harvest in the fall when they are brown and laying on the ground. (Could I harvest them earlier in the season when they are green, and let them dry and then use them? Ooh, sounds like a good experiment!)

Corn husks are pretty good, accessible in the fall, strong enough, but somewhat hard to roll and twist. I rip them into 1/8 strips to cord.

Paper napkins ripped the long way into 1/2" strips can be rolled, twisted a bit, and then corded. Fun! What else might you discover that will make a useful cord?

Maple trees are a favorite of mine for small buildings because they are abundant here in lower Michigan, grow straight, and are a relatively soft hardwood to notch.

Thatching with Foraged Phragmites (reed grass)

Phragmites are some of the most enduring of natural materials with which to thatch a roof. We learned the basics of this ancient craft from a Danish thatcher who taught the core building team at Strawbale Studio how to apply the reed to a small structure. These roofs are expected to last 25 to 40 years, depending on the quality of the reed, the application, and the weather situation. I oversaw the thatching project at the Kid's Cottage at Kensington Metropark in 2007. It is 17 years old now and doing well. Strawbale Studio's thatched roof is 25 years old!

Harvesting: Reeds are collected during the dormant time of the year when the ground is frozen and the reed fields, which are often in wet areas, are accessible. We hand-harvest the reed with serrated sickles. A permit from the DNR/DEQ was obtained and the seed heads are left in the field. Each bundle is about eight inches in diameter, tied with two strings, and cut to a five-foot length.

Storing: Reeds can be stored in a tipi shape and covered by a tarp or stacked flat in alternating directions in a barn or indoor space.

Application: Originally, we were taught to apply the reed bundles by attaching them to purlin, horizontal poles, placed every foot on the roof rafters. The details on thatching are beyond the scope of this article. Basically, they are attached to the roof in overlapping rows, starting at the bottom of the roof. Many resources, including process videos and information can be found at strawbalestudio.org/about/thatching.

For spoon carving, my current favorite wood to use is staghorn sumac. It has beautiful contrasting growth rings, and an elegant yellow green iridescent color.

Foraging Wood for Round Pole Projects & Spoon Carving

Small structures can use poles from trees on the land that are felled, then debarked, and notched or lashed to create a framework. Maple trees are a favorite of mine for small buildings because they are abundant here in lower Michigan, grow straight, and are a relatively soft hardwood to notch. For spoon carving, my current favorite wood to use is staghorn sumac. It has beautiful contrasting growth rings, and an elegant yellow green iridescent color. When it is cut and fresh, it is soft and easy to carve, and then dries to a strong final product. Black cherry and birch are other favorites.

Harvesting: Gathering wood can be done year-round in my experience. Some people dry poles for many months before using them, others use them in their "green" state. For spoon carving, the wood is whittled while green.

Storing: For spoon carving, the soft quality of the green, wet wood can be preserved by putting pieces of the wood in a plastic bag for a number of weeks, or in the freezer for longer term storage until ready to carve.

What else can we forage and make? So many wonderful things! Visit the Strawbale Studio website at strawbalestudio.org for potential workshops, to get on the email list, and to check out the many resources, articles, photos, and videos. The Michigan Folk School also offers wonderful classes in traditional crafts. Visit them online at mifolkschool.com.

Welcome to Spirit Seeds! In this new column readers submit their questions, and we dive deep to find the answers. We'll embark on a journey of holistic exploration, delving into ancient practices and unraveling the enigmas of existence. Whether you're a seasoned enthusiast or a curious newcomer, this column offers a platform for deepening your understanding and expanding your consciousness. Are you curious about a certain new-age subject or practice? Seeking advice or perspective on a spiritual or holistic matter? Submit your questions at AskSpiritSeed@gmail.com and have a chance to be featured in our next issue.

How can I better harness the energy of lunar cycles in my manifestation rituals? I feel like my intentions aren't materializing as strongly as I'd hoped.

First, you need to very clearly set your intentions. See what it is you are trying to manifest clearly in your mind's eye before you start doing any type of ritual work. Then align your intentions with the phases of the moon. Each phase of the lunar cycle is powerful in assisting each phase of your manifestation. The new moon is perfect for setting new intentions and beginning new projects—think of it as planting seeds. Take some quiet time to meditate on what you truly want to manifest, write it down, and keep it somewhere special. As the moon moves into the waxing crescent and first quarter phases, focus on taking actionable steps toward your goals. This is the time to put in the work and stay motivated. Use visualization techniques and keep affirming your intentions daily.

The full moon is when the moon's energy is at its peak, making it a great time for amplifying your manifestations and expressing gratitude. Have a full moon ritual where you light candles, speak your intentions out loud, and visualize them coming to fruition. It's also a good time to release any negative energy or obstacles that might be holding you back. During the waning gibbous and last quarter phases, focus on letting go of what no longer serves you. Reflect on your progress, adjust your plans if necessary, and clear out any clutter, both physically and mentally. Finally, in the waning crescent phase, rest and recharge. Reflect on your journey, practice self-care, and prepare for the next new moon cycle. Consistency is key. Keep a lunar journal to track your rituals and manifestations. Be patient and compassionate with yourself; sometimes, it takes a few cycles to see significant results. Trust the process and stay aligned with the lunar energy.

I've been practicing remote healing. What are the most advanced methods to ensure that the healing energy is transmitted effectively over long distances?

Remote healing takes patience and practice, but in time profound results can be achieved. First, establish a strong energetic connection. Before you start, ground yourself through deep breathing or a brief meditation. Visualize roots growing from your feet into the earth, anchoring you. Next, create a clear mental image of the person you're sending healing to. Focus on their face and imagine a golden light connecting your heart to theirs. This helps bridge the physical distance energetically. Using symbols can be very effective. In Reiki, for example, the Hon Sha Ze Sho Nen symbol is specifically used for distance healing. Drawing or visualizing this symbol can strengthen your intent and direct energy more precisely. Set a sacred space for your healing session, even if it's remote. Light a candle, play soft music, or use crystals like Clear Quartz or Amethyst to amplify your energy. These elements help create a powerful, focused environment.

While sending energy, stay in a state of unconditional love and compassion. Your intention is key, so maintain a positive and focused mindset. Visualize the person enveloped in healing light, seeing them whole and healthy. After the session, ground yourself again and disconnect from their energy to maintain healthy boundaries. Drinking water and resting can also help you recover. Lastly, trust in the process. Remote healing works through intention and universal energy, so believe in your ability to make a positive impact. Regular practice will strengthen your skills and your connection to the healing energy.

I've noticed repeating angel numbers, particularly 11:11 and 333, in my daily life. How can I decipher the specific messages my angels are trying to communicate?

Noticing repeating angel numbers like 11:11, 10:10, and 333 is a clear sign that your angels are trying to communicate with you. When you see 11:11, it's a powerful reminder that you are aligned with your higher self and the universe. It's a call to focus on your true desires and spiritual growth. The number 1 often signifies new beginnings and opportunities. Take a moment to reflect on what you truly want, and set positive intentions.

Seeing 10:10 is a message about personal development and spiritual awakening. It's a nudge to stay optimistic and trust the process. This number often appears when you need to keep faith in your path and recognize that you are being guided toward your highest good. Think of it as an encouragement to stay focused and persistent. Don't give up just yet. Your blessings are surely coming.

The number 333 indicates that the Ascended Masters are close by, offering their support and encouragement. It's a sign that you are on the right path and that your talents and abilities are being recognized. This number often appears when you need reassurance and guidance to express your true self and embrace your inner power. To get more clarity, spend a few moments in quiet reflection or meditation when you see these numbers. Ask your angels for guidance and be open to receiving their messages through your intuition, dreams, or sudden insights. Keep a journal to note when and where you see these numbers and any thoughts or events surrounding them. Over time, patterns will emerge, revealing deeper meanings. Trust your intuition, stay positive, and know that your angels are always there to support and guide you.

I've been exploring the concept of soul contracts and am curious how I can identify and fulfill my current life's agreements. What techniques or meditations can aid in this discovery?

A soul contract is something each one of us has taken on before we make our journey for life here on Earth. Identifying them is most often the easy part — fulfilling them can take time. Meditation is a powerful tool for this discovery. Start with a quiet space where you won't be disturbed. Close your eyes, take deep breaths, and center yourself. Visualize a golden light surrounding you, providing protection and clarity. Ask your higher self to reveal your soul contracts. You might see images, feel emotions, or hear messages that give you clues about your agreements. Journaling after meditation can be incredibly insightful. Write down any thoughts, feelings, or images that come up. Over time, patterns will emerge that can help you understand your soul contracts. Pay attention to recurring themes, people, or situations in your life—they often point to these agreements.

Consider working with a past life regression therapist or a spiritual advisor. They can guide you through sessions that reveal past life experiences and the contracts carried over into this life. These sessions can provide clarity on unresolved issues or lessons you're meant to learn. Also, practice mindfulness and be observant of your relationships and experiences. Often, soul contracts are reflected in significant relationships or recurring life themes. Notice what challenges and joys consistently appear in your life, as they usually indicate areas where your soul is working through its contracts. Finally, trust your intuition. Your inner knowing is a direct line to your higher self and your soul's purpose. By staying open and attentive, you'll gradually uncover and fulfill your soul contracts, aligning with your higher path. Be patient and compassionate with yourself throughout this journey.

Triana Jones is certified in Quantum Healing Hypnosis Therapy, Reiki 1 & 2, and Herbalism. She founded Spirit Seed Center, a virtual learning space. She lives in Ypsilanti with her two young children and their pitbull, Akasha.

Your Nodal Axis Knows

By Amy Lagler

Years ago, my friend Lorraine and I were comparing junior high report cards which, back then, were much more than a letter grade representing your academic successes and failures. Teachers actually wrote a list of everything they wanted your parents to know you were or weren't doing. In my case, the list was long and critical.

"Not living up to her potential" appeared on my report card every time, something I never fully understood, as I tried every single day to make people laugh. Apparently, my teachers believed I should set my sights on a different goal. "Disruptive in class" also appeared every time, and most of the rest of the list had something to do with the fact that I would not shut up.

Lorraine had a lot of choice comments on her report cards too, but the one I loved the most (and later stole for my website and short-lived blog) was "habitual time waster." It made me laugh, in part, because Lorraine is definitely *not* a time waster. I can see though that, like me, Lorraine has her own ideas of time well spent, and they probably ran afoul of the traditional K-12 curriculum.

In truth, Lorraine is a lifelong student of the universe, endlessly looking for answers, studying different fields of thought and, thankfully, sharing her ideas with friends like me. It was one of her latest forays into the world of astrology and birth charts that brought me back to thinking about my report cards.

I can see though that, like me, Lorraine has her own ideas of time well spent, and they probably ran afoul of the traditional K-12 curriculum.

I didn't know much about astrology, so when Lorraine presented me with my birth chart last year, a literal map of the sky at the exact moment and location of my birth with all the planets and stars located within a zodiac wheel, it was a bit of a revelation. I'd known I was a Gemini since I was very young (I grew up in the 1970s after all) but I didn't have any idea I had multiple planets in Gemini—three to be exact:the Sun, Mercury, and Mars. I'm certain that anyone who knows anything about astrology just had an immediate understanding of what I must have been like in my youth (okay, maybe I'm still like that; my birth chart hasn't changed after all).

For those that don't know much about astrology, the Sun conveys your central purpose or vitality, Mercury reveals how you communicate and connect with others, and Mars reflects how you take action and assert yourself. Having all three of these planets in Gemini, a sign known for being social, playful, easily bored, and (above all) *talkative*, probably explains why I'm a bit gregarious (some might say obnoxious). Or they might simply say something I've heard a lot in my life, "Amy please stop talking."

The revelations of my birth chart didn't stop with the trio of planets I have sitting in chatty Gemini. Far more interesting to me was the little matter of my Nodes. There is a South Node, presumably what you come into this life with (the skills you have developed in previous lives) and a North Node, which is where you should be headed and what you are here to work on this time around. I had never heard of Nodes before, although I had been told that my birth chart might give me a sense of my life's path or some idea about the journey I am on this time around. Skeptic that I am, I assumed the information would be pretty vague and full of generalities that could probably apply to most of the population. I never expected it to be so specific and spot on—and not necessarily in a good way. Be forewarned that if you develop some curiosity about your own Nodes, reading about them can really piss you off.

One thing I've learned about many astrologers is that they don't really care if they piss you off. There is no sugar coating the stars. What's funny to me is how it is the most obvious stuff, the stuff all your friends know, that *really* sets you off when you hear it from a random astrologer.

Take, for instance, the very first thing I read about my Nodal Axis (North Node in Taurus. South Node in Scorpio). Apparently, that indicates that I have an excessive need for external validation. What the hell? That's not true. I'm super confident, some might say overconfident. It's a lifelong quality that has gotten me into trouble repeatedly, often with very comic results. I was furious with disbelief that anyone, let alone someone who had never met me, would accuse me of needing external validation.

I didn't know much about astrology, so when Lorraine presented me with my birth chart last year, a literal map of the sky at the exact moment and location of my birth with all the planets and stars located within a zodiac wheel, it was a bit of a revelation.

But wait! Maybe I should point out that I used to be a professor. For anyone who has been around professors that is probably enough said. For anyone else, trust me when I say professors need, crave, and seek out external validation. It's the necessary component, the secret sauce of what keeps you in school for that long and makes you read so many books, take so many exams, and attend so many mind-numbingly boring seminars. I haven't been a professor in decades, but I remember the ego stroking it provided. It felt very nice. Is it self-evident to point out I'm still seeking external validation at some level? You're reading something I wrote so… yes? Let's move along.

Aside from the true but still somewhat vague generality that I'm a validation seeker, my Nodal Axis also had some very specific things to say about my past lives. My South Node in Scorpio indicates I've had a lot of go arounds that were turbulent, full of drama, intensity, drugs, sex, and power seeking. Possibly that might explain my teenage years in a broader historical context. Astrologers also agree that with this Nodal Axis I was probably a Courtesan in several past lives. Possibly that might explain other things, like how I ended up writing my dissertation on prostitution in Chicago during the Gilded Age. I've always wondered what made me interested in that.

Is it self-evident to point out I'm still seeking external validation at some level? You're reading something I wrote so... yes? Let's move along.

Thankfully, in this lifetime I've had other options and, according to my Nodes, I should end up a person of authority, possibly like a professor. Interestingly, they also indicate that I will somehow get involved in antiques, a suggestion that seemed overly specific and even more funny for being true. In fact, I quit being a professor to open an antique store. Oh, I laughed. Maybe there is something to these Nodes after all. If so, I'm right on track.

Overall, I wouldn't be unhappy if the astrology was spot on this time around as a North Node in Taurus means journeying toward a life of peace, spiritual growth, and contentment (I guess time will tell!). I'm pretty sure though that even if my travels take me toward a life of peace, I'm going to be disruptive and chatty through this whole wild ride. Rest assured, I will keep reaching for my true potential and keep trying to make you laugh.

Amy Lagler lives in Ann Arbor, where she continues to unwittingly follow her Nodal Axis. Having closed down the antique store, she now spends most of her time in nature and continues to talk an alarming amount to others, her dog, and, occasionally, herself if no one else is available. She also still happily panders to external validation so please feel free to email her at habitualtimewaster@gmail.com.

Astrologically Speaking

THE FAB FIVE: OUR OUTER PLANETS

JUPITER, SATURN, URANUS, NEPTUNE AND PLUTO

By Catherine Carlson

Moving beyond Mercury through Mars, the outer planets typically are going to have a less personal effect on us in the everyday sense. The longer orbits of these planets mean they don't change signs as often so they will be in the same signs as people around our same age or in our same generation. For example, if you were born between 1998 and 2011, you have Neptune in the sign of Aquarius.

OVER THREE HUNDRED TIMES BIGGER THAN EARTH AND NICKNAMED THE GREAT BENEFIC, JUPITER BEHAVES LIKE SANTA CLAUS: JOLLY AND GENEROUS.

JUPITER: THE BIG FRIENDLY GIANT

Over three hundred times bigger than Earth and nicknamed the Great Benefic, Jupiter behaves like Santa Claus: jolly and generous. Known as Zeus in Greek mythology or the Norse Thor, Roman named Jupiter is the sky-god, or god of thunder, depicted as an eagle holding a thunderbolt in his talons on Greek and Roman coins. It is known as the planet of luck, good fortune, and expansion. More is always better according to Jupiter.

Jupiter is the classical ruler of the sign Sagittarius as well as Pisces (before Neptune was discovered). Sagittarius' qualities can include being a lover of adventure and travel or being a truth seeker through religion or education. It is often the sign of a teacher. Other significations include abundance, generosity, loving a gathering (the more the merrier), and staying a little longer for dessert or another drink. The Piscean energy of Jupiter presents as a broader concept of faith, figuring out what you believe in—what is real to you and what is not. The shadow side is doing things in excess. If your sun or other planets are in these signs, you will relate to these qualities, which can also be activated by a Jupiter transit.

Jupiter has a cycle of about 12 years. This means within a few months or so of turning 12, 24, 36, 48 and so on, you will experience a Jupiter return. Because of the abundant nature of this planet, these are good times to make a wish list! Jupiter will be traveling through Gemini until next spring.

SATURN: TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

In Roman mythology, Saturn, or the Greek-named Chronos is the God of Time. Saturn is a brother of Jupiter and rules the earth plane. Known as the Great Malefic and the lord of karma. While Jupiter expands, Saturn does the opposite. It constricts and restricts, forcing us to follow rules of order and be responsible. Saturn is inescapable. Sooner or later, we must all take care of business and do our work.

Saturn is the traditional ruler of the signs Capricorn and Aquarius (before Uranus was discovered). Through Capricorn, Saturn represents the father archetype that takes on the responsibility of providing for family and in children through discipline and structure. Saturn helps us create a solid foundation in our lives through challenges and lessons. Someone with a strong Saturn influence is going to be a naturally hard worker and be serious. Saturn's Aquarian influence merges a strong will with one's own set of rules; freedom within structure, makes a person ahead of their time. Saturn types can be overly responsible as children, appearing older than their age. This falls away over time, and they appear youthful.

Saturn impacts us personally every 28-30 years when it completes a cycle called our "Saturn return." Each return is marked by a significant event unique to each person. The first event occurring between the ages of 28-30 is what pushes us into adulthood. In 2024 and into 2025, Saturn will travel through Pisces.

URANIAN INFLUENCE BY BIRTH OR TRANSIT CAN MEAN YOU ARE A MAVERICK WITH AN INSPIRED MIND CAPABLE OF CREATING TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS.

URANUS: GREASED LIGHTENING!

Uranus was the first of the other outer planets to make up modern astrology. Uranus, or the Greek *Ouranos*, is named for the God of the sky and the starry heavens. For a time, Uranus was considered the god of the universe. It was the first planet to be discovered by a telescope in 1781 during the time of the French and American revolutions. Because of this, Uranus came to represent technology, rebels, and humanitarian causes.

In modern astrology, Uranus rules the sign of Aquarius. A strong Uranian influence by birth or transit can mean you are a maverick with an inspired mind capable of creating technological innovations. You may have a strong network of friends or be a humanitarian. Wherever Uranus shows up for you personally is the area in your life where things are a little offbeat or quirky—whether it's your home, ancestors, career, creativity, or self-expression. We need the Uranian energy of revolution to help us get to the next phase of our evolution.

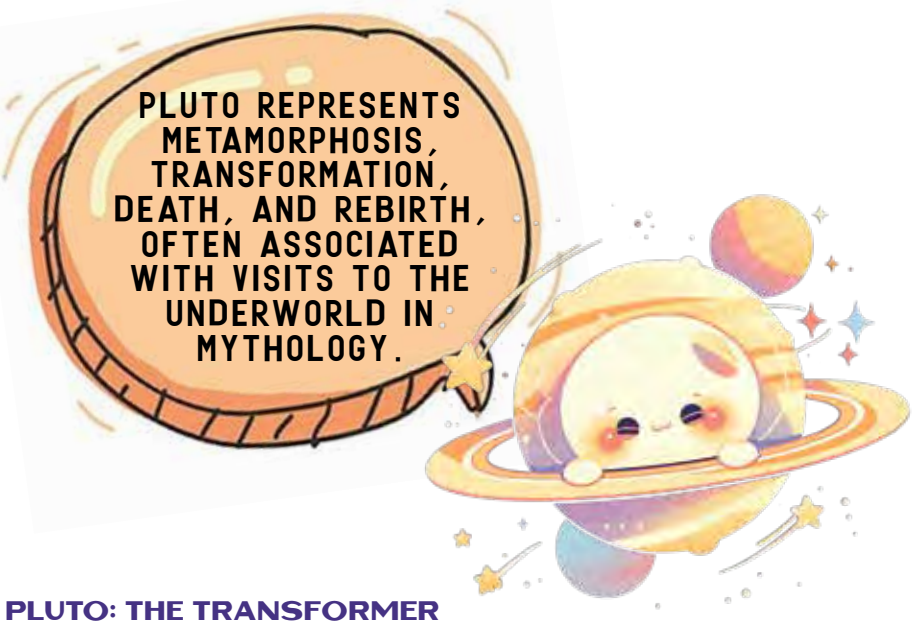
Uranus cycles through the zodiac about every 82 years. At the halfway point of 41 years of age, you may revisit something you did not get to do in your early 20s and feel the impulse to pursue it again. From 2024 through 2025, Uranus will finish up a long run in Taurus.

NEPTUNE: THE INVISIBLE MAN

Named for the god of the sea, Neptune, or Poseidon in the Greek tradition, was discovered during the time photography was invented—which allowed people to view other people, places, and events that previously remained unseen. This is the magical quality of Neptune. It reveals what is hidden—or it can mask what is there. The sea life in the ocean exists below our awareness. Neptune shows us what exists beneath our conscious awareness.

Neptune in modern astrology rules Pisces, the last water sign of the Zodiac. People with a strong Pisces or Neptune influence can have a strong intuition and be sensitive to the invisible world, picking up on things that are unseen by others. A Neptunian person may be "dreamy" and be skilled at bringing dreams into reality. They may also wear rose-colored glasses or prefer to escape reality.

"Now you see me, now you don't," says Neptune, and with the naked eye sometimes it is and other times not, leading us to question what's real and what isn't. If we can't see it, does it exist? Until next spring, Neptune will be in the sign of Pisces.


PLUTO REPRESENTS METAMORPHOSIS, TRANSFORMATION, DEATH, AND REBIRTH, OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH VISITS TO THE UNDERWORLD IN MYTHOLOGY.

PLUTO: THE TRANSFORMER

To all astrology folks, Pluto is still a planet. It may be small in size comparatively, but it packs tremendous power. Pluto was discovered in 1930 after noticing something that appeared to be beyond Neptune. Pluto, or Hades, in Greek mythology is named after the god of the underworld. It is a suitable name for the cold outlier out of the reach of the sun and beyond what was our known solar system.

Pluto is not a light or easy energy, but it has its place. Pluto represents metamorphosis, transformation, death, and rebirth, often associated with visits to the underworld in mythology. In astrology, it rules the sign of Scorpio. Someone with a strong Pluto or Scorpio influence is more comfortable with deep or dark subject matter and investigating beneath the surface. They may be naturally resilient—perhaps a healer in their own right. Pluto types must often deal with power in some way, and they may like to be in control.

All eyes are on Pluto right now as it mirrors what we are collectively going through. This November, just after the US election, Pluto will leave Capricorn for good and move into Aquarius for twenty-one years, reflecting monumental changes and doing things differently.

Just like the sea defines the land around it over time, the longer orbits of the outer planets mean their effect will last over a period of years. You can view your life through astrology by looking at how the energy and transits of these planets have helped shape your growth.

Ann Arbor native Catherine Carlson is an astrologer who offers consultations for adults and children, She can be reached through her website at catherine-carlson.com or by emailing catenka@mac.com.

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Be You Not Afraid: Redeeming the Most Feared Major Arcana

By Audrey Hall

As I was offering tarot card readings at a local flea market, I was approached by a woman of 75 years who said she'd never received a reading before. I told her I'd be happy to be her first, and she said, "Just as long as you don't pull the death card." Lo and behold, she shuffled the cards, and Death was the first card I pulled. We laughed, and it turned out the placement in this spread was her biggest distraction, which she affirmed was a common fixation for those her age. Though she was being facetious, this isn't an uncommon hysteria surrounding tarot. I often hear people say things like, "Just as long as you don't pull the Tower!" or avoiding tarot entirely because of having pulled daunting cards in the past. Many who have no familiarity at all see Death or the Devil and wince. There's obvious cultural and personal tensions these cards can conjure given the unsettling archetypes of oblivion, destruction, and suffering they draw upon. Traditionally, interpretations of these cards match the sentiments they manifest, but could there be a deeper dynamic therein?

Lo and behold, she shuffled the cards, and Death was the first card I pulled. We laughed, and it turned out the placement in this spread was her biggest distraction, which she affirmed was a common fixation for those her age.

When it comes to the Death card, popular consensus tends toward seeing a symbol of rebirth. This has made it relatively easy to assuage anxieties surrounding the "Child of the Great Transformer" as an omen to be celebrated as the dawn of a new chapter. The stigma remains for the likes of Judgment, the Devil, and the Tower. I have personally developed a serious soft spot for these ominous archetypes. When reading with the classic Smith-Waite, I find these cards both contextually and individually capable of positive, optimistic, and empowering messages. I do embrace their darkness as there are readings wherein their brutal truths are necessary, but never do I marry them to misfortune. By opening ourselves to the strength and hope they offer, we can become more versatile in what we learn from tarot as a whole.

Below I will disambiguate traditional, popular, and personal interpretations of three Major Arcana which are feared—and even loathed—by the masses. Together let us redeem these cards as tools, lessons, and reassurance rather than condemning them to fear.

Judgment

Though this card is mentioned far less than other ominous Major Arcana and may even be celebrated at face value among certain spiritual sects, I chose to redeem this card based on my own personal anxieties surrounding its symbolism. Being one of the most overtly Christian archetypes depicted within the tarot, the Judgment card depicts events described in the Book of Revelation. At the end of time, the Archangel Gabriel blows his horn, and the souls of the living and dead are judged for their sins. Depending on denomination and personal belief, our souls are then directed to heaven, hell, or purgatory. While some may look upon this day with great anticipation and enthusiasm, it remains a source of anxiety for others as we were raised to fear this great reckoning and become "right with God" before he comes "like a thief in the night" to cast us into a "lake of fire."

Largely the redemption of this card lies in its traditional interpretations and an allegorical instrumentation of the apocalypse it represents. Taking it at face value with the symbolism of the Marseilles deck, we see an angel calling from heaven to earth below where the masses gather nude beneath. Easily enough this can be seen as an opportunity to let go and ascend, to heed the call and rise above our present circumstances to absolution above. In the story of the Major Arcana, this comes just before the world which represents absolution and fulmination, thus affirming a message of ascendancy.

Revisiting the darker depths of this card, a reckoning that comes without warning can still be empowering. In the Hermetic Deck, this card is called "Spirit of the Primal Fire" drawing upon the scorched earth nature of the Rapture as described in Revelation. Scorched earth may seem daunting, but often this approach is necessary to bring an end to negative cycles, a final resolution following a serious judgment call about what's working and what isn't in our lives. We often fear and avoid the reckonings we face, especially if we are the ones judging the quick and the dead, but they come whether or not we're ready or willing. Taking agency over Judgment is a powerful tool. Though there may be fire, peace and silence is soon to follow.

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The Devil

Almost as easily recognized as Death itself, this card tends to particularly perturb those aforementioned as enthusiastic for the Last Judgment. Devils are found in the folklore and cosmologies of many cultures. Portrayed as tricksters, tempters, punishers, destroyers, and overall adversaries of goodness and life, they are universally feared and hated by the pious. Traditionally, the Devil is seen as a severe and even violent ordeal wherein two individuals are bound. This can represent a legal contract like a lease, job, or marriage that cannot be escaped. More generally this card is interpreted as a burden we must carry or a terror we must face. When interpreting the Devil as a negative force, I describe him as a "bond formed in severity" in contrast to the Lovers, "a bond formed in harmony."

Horrors aside, these chains that bind the two individuals before the Devil are very loose around their necks in the classic Smith-Waite. At any time, we can relieve ourselves of this burden, but we choose to continue our bondage for better or worse.

Horrors aside, these chains that bind the two individuals before the Devil are very loose around their necks in the classic Smith-Waite. At any time, we can relieve ourselves of this burden, but we choose to continue our bondage for better or worse. In the interest of empowerment, I sometimes refer to the Devil as a taskmaster who calls others to task on their promises and contracts. I encourage the querent to take on this role and hold others accountable or accept accountability for themselves when the time comes. It can be horrifying to be or face the Devil, but if we are unwilling to make good on our promises, we have nothing. Our word is a bond we should not break.

The Devil also takes on many positive forms, especially in the lives of those aforementioned as less enthusiastic about the Last Judgment. Many have seen the Great Satan as rebel leader and accuser of hypocrites. Other appreciators of this archetype see him as capable of placing us in touch with our true natures against the grain of ascetic dogma. The Devil is called "Lord of the Gates of Matter" in the Hermetic deck. While some interpret this to mean he is a deceiver because the world of matter is an illusion, I choose to see him as a revelator capable of placing us in touch with material reality. Many might see material reality itself as a burden and a bond formed in severity. In my practice, I embrace this mantle as Truth.

The Tower

This card is an example of one more intimidating to seasoned readers and querents alike than it would be to a layperson. Still even without familiarity, the imagery speaks for itself. In the classic Smith-Waite, the tower is destroyed by lightning from the heavens, and from it, screaming people fall to their doom. The Tower has a clear message: something is destroyed violently and abruptly. The imagery is dark, gritty, and uncomfortable by design. Unease is a reasonable emotional response to this card.

Though it may be difficult to imagine destruction as a comfortable process, it's only healthy that we acknowledge the very powerful niche it's held in existence from the beginning of time. We may not be ready for it, but the reality of it can be embraced and forgiven. A model for this can be found in the Three Vinegar

Tasters, a painting by an artist at the Kanō school in Japan. The sixteenth century painting shows Confucius, Buddha, and Lao Tzu all tasting vinegar from a vat. Confucius tastes the vinegar and holds it in his mouth with a grimace. Buddha spits the vinegar out in disgust. Lao Tzu tastes the vinegar and smiles, teaching us to accept suffering alongside pleasure as they hold equal space in life. This is the wisdom with which one can lovingly accept the Tower in our reading.

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Another perspective on the Tower I often offer my querents is being the bolt and not the Tower. This reading offers the strength and power to destroy an obstacle—often one of our own making. We don't always have to wait for permission to take matters into our hands. We don't always have to meditate before the wall until it erodes away. We can take our thunderbolt and smite the Tower looming over us. Hesitancy toward this approach comes in many forms. Sometimes there is a feeling of sunk cost, an unwillingness to wrend the structure we've poured ourselves into developing. Other times we don't want to be messy or offend others by exercising our power. Either way, the Tower card bears the omen that this destruction will come whether or not the time is right. It could be worth it to initiate that process on our own terms.

I also strongly disclaim any sort of major life decisions being made at the behest or signal of tarot cards, especially the call to destroy. I never find my querents discouraged or disappointed by this because they often find the Tower holds a much-needed mirror to the cataclysms we all face regardless. Tarot cards are designed for these reflections by archetypes drawn from collective consciousness. It's through these archetypes we find not only ourselves but each other. My deepest draw to tarot as a reader is the connections I've made with friends, strangers, and even myself through their poignant depictions of human life. You share the meaning of a card in a spread and watch the eyes of the querent glisten as they glean wisdom for related dilemmas they need not share…but I do love when they share them.

As we embrace the more kind and positive outlooks on these ominous and jarring Major Arcana, we should also take a look at the ominous messages held within tarot cards we revere as kind and positive. Whether one considers these shadow meanings as relevant only to reversed cards or takes stock of them regardless, one cannot ignore the darkness held beneath the light. The Sun may seem gleeful, but optimism can blind our eyes to the truth with mirages and naïveté. Strength can represent our patience and fortitude, but it can also be holding a lion at bay with everything we have. The World may be our absolution, but it can also be the crushing weight of the universe around our minuscule presence and the vulnerability therein. No card is necessarily "safe" between the traditional and intuitive miasma we can extrapolate, and sometimes that very vapor can be affirming to the sadness and suffering we feel. Acknowledging these afflictions is necessary to healing them.

Within tarot, I see faces of life both beautiful and haunting. Avoidance is not the answer to suffering. We don't necessarily benefit from focusing exclusively on the messages that give us comfort. Allowing ourselves to be confronted by the tarot and held accountable for our choices is where I've found growth. We should celebrate our joy and console ourselves for wounds we had no say in, but the choice is ours to heal. When life gives us Death, let us seek rebirth. When Judgement befalls us, we are called to ascend. As we face the Devil, let us seek the truth. Our towers may fall, but let ruin be the foundation of our greatest triumph.

Audrey Rosanna Gabrielle Hall is a dirt witch from the foothills of the Smoky Mountains raised on a cattle farm and baptized in a creek. She studies cartomancy as well as Appalachian folk magic. For readings and services in witchcraft, she is Madame Brute, the Bull Woman of Ypsilanti. She performs bestial chant rituals as Mother Behemoth. You can contact her about readings and/or rituals at brunhildabrute@gmail.com.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

a free guide to local classes, workshops, and events

September through December 2024

Calendar edited by Kaili Brooks

A Course of Miracles

A Course in Miracles (ACIM) Study Group with Rev. David Bell & Randall Counts • Mondays, September 2 through December 30 from 6:45 to 8:00 p.m. OR Thursdays, September 5 through December 26 from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. • Practical application of course principles to daily life. Text and study materials are included. FREE, donations gratefully accepted. For more information, visit interfaithspirit.org.

Art and Craft

Wheel Throwing Course with Throw Art Studio • Ongoing Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, & Saturdays • Times Vary • Learn to wheel throw in six sessions and receive an in-depth look at the ceramic creation process. Keep what you make! Bright, open studio space with cafe on-site. New sessions start at the beginning of each month with classes available morning and evening, weekday, and weekend. $279. For more information visit throwannarbor.com.

Solo Exhibition of Simon Ha's Paintings: Elemental Revelations with Raymond James Ann Arbor • Thursday, September 19 through Tuesday, November 19 • Opening Ceremony 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. • Ha's solo exhibition, aptly titled "Elemental Revelations," invites visitors to immerse themselves in the profound and often unseen forces that shape our existence. At the heart of this exhibition lies the central theme of sudden revelations about the elemental forces working within and around us. These abstract acrylic paintings serve as both a visual and emotional journey, inspired by the invisible yet palpable energies that influence our daily lives. Located at Raymond James and Associates, 350 S Main St #100, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. FREE. For more information visit simon-ha.com

Artalicious Fine Arts Fair • Saturday, September 21 from 11 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. & Sunday, September 22 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Artalicious is the perfect mix of fine art, food, and entertainment. Featuring more than 60 talented local and regional artists, you are sure to find something that speaks to you. Ongoing live music and free parking. FREE. For more information visit artalicious.org.

Harvest Art Market with Silver Maples of Chelsea • Saturday, October 5 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • A juried, fine arts and crafts market at the beautiful Silver Maples of Chelsea. Many local artists and craftsmen. Find something beautiful for your holiday decorating or gift giving needs. FREE. For more information visit silvermaples.org.

The Art, Science & Reciprocity of EcoCreativity with Robin Lily Goldberg • Wednesday, October 16, 23, & 30 • 6 to 7:00 p.m. • This series illustrates how meaningful poems, stories, and paintings can emerge through co-creating with the Earth. We'll draw inspiration from visionary writers and artists to experience the regenerative benefits of collaborating with our environments. Everyone has creative capacities within, and everyone is welcome. $45. For more information contact Robin at robinlily@outlook.com.

2024 Art Auction with the Prison Creative Arts Project • Saturday, December 7 • 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. • The Art Auction raises funds for the 29th Annual Exhibition of Artists in Michigan Prisons. Admission is free. As a fundraising event, we offer the opportunity to contribute by covering event costs for yourself or sponsoring attendance for another guest. FREE. For more information contact PCAP staff at pcapinfo@umich.edu or visit prisonarts.org.

Candle-making and Crafts with Deanne Bednar • Sunday, December 8 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Enjoy the aroma and peace of making dipped beeswax candles and other natural earth crafts at Strawbale Studio. $50 including materials. For more information visit strawbalestudio.org.

Ayurveda

Ayurveda for Well-Being with Kapila Castoldi • Sunday, October 20, 27, & November 3 • 2 to 4:00 p.m. • Ayurveda offers a body of wisdom designed to help people stay vibrant and healthy while realizing their full human potential. The series will focus on understanding our unique mind-body type, living in tune with our nature, and achieving the body-mind balance that brings about harmony and happiness in life. FREE. For more information contact Kapila at (734) 994-7114, email castoldi@oakland.edu, or visit meditationannarbor.com.

Book Discussion Groups

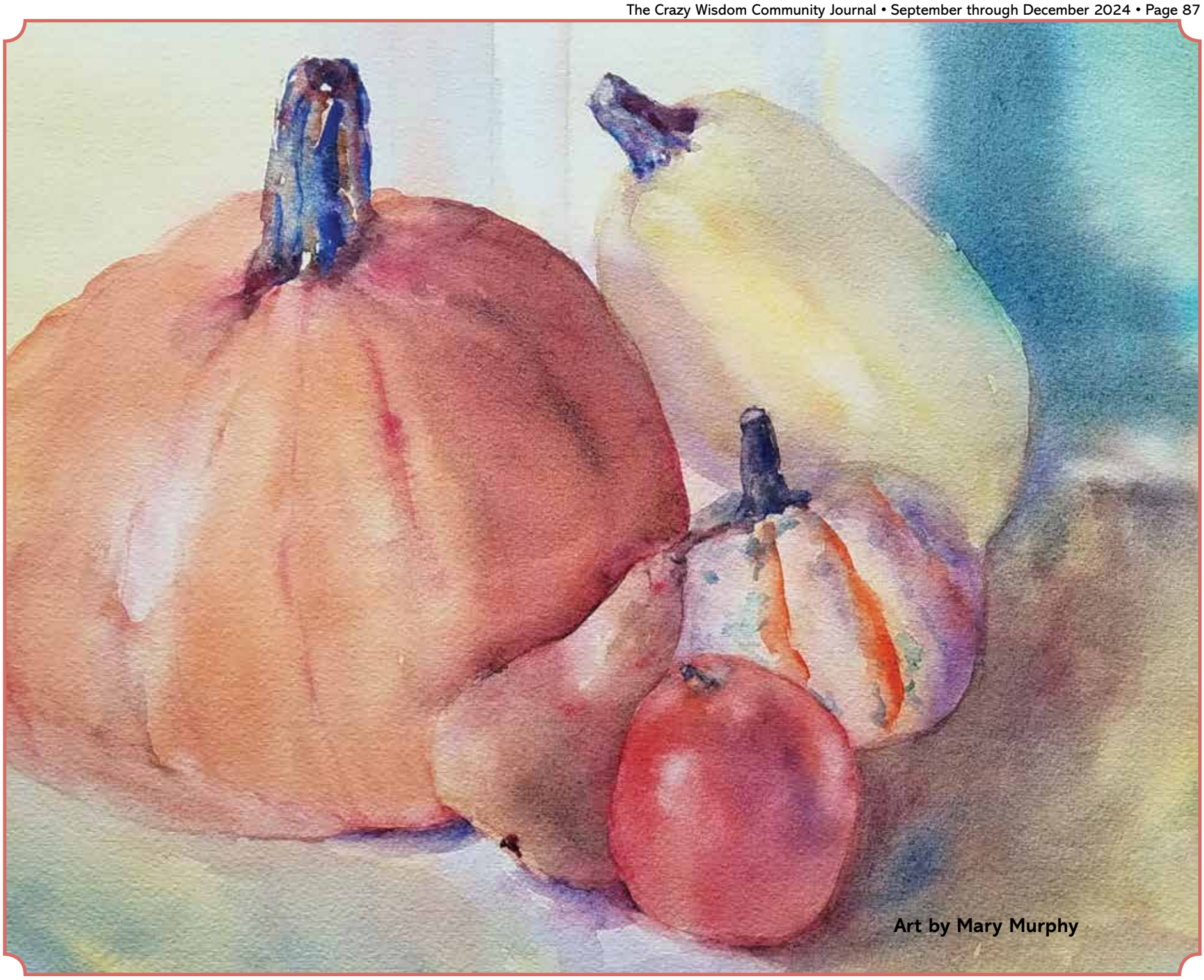
Crazy Wisdom Book Discussion Group with Bill Zirinsky • Thursday, September 27 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Featuring *A Post-Truth World: Politics, Polarization, and a Vison for Transcending the Chaos* by Ken Wilber. The monthly book discussion connects participants through the selection, reading, and discussion of books from Crazy Wisdom Bookstore's diverse inventory. All book discussion titles will be available at Crazy Wisdom at 20% off. FREE. For more information contact Bill at billz@crazywisdom.net.

Crazy Wisdom Monthly Book Discussion with Rachel Pastiva • Friday, October 25 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • The monthly book discussion connects participants through the selection, reading, and discussion of books from Crazy Wisdom Bookstore's diverse inventory. All book discussion titles will be available at Crazy Wisdom at 20% off. October 's pick: Unwell Women: Misdiagnosis and Myth in a Man-made World by Elinor Cleghorn. FREE. For more information contact Susan at eventsandbookings@crazywisdom.net.

Book Events

Zelu Distro Zine Launch Party with Bloodroot Herb Shop & Zelu Zine Distro • Thursday, September 10 • 2 to 4:00 p.m. • Zine launch party with Zelu Zine Distro. Come enjoy a wide variety of no-cost zines, herbal mocktails and tea, a sticker shop and merch sale, and a Do-It-Yourself zine station! FREE, donations welcome. For more information visit bloodrootherbshop.com

If you are interested in obtaining some biographical information about the teachers, lecturers, and workshop leaders whose classes, talks, and events are listed in this calendar, please look in the section that follows the calendar, which is called "Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders, and The Centers" and which starts on page 102.



Art by Mary Murphy

Our Calendar Editor's Picks of Interesting Happenings in Our Community

- **Witches Night Out with Moira Payne** ~ See Pagan Spirituality
- **Sound Healing and Self Care with Jaime Lawrence & Kimberly Joy Rieli** ~ See Music, Sound, and Voice
- **Life's Spiritual Wake-up Calls by ECKANKAR**. ~ See Spiritual Development
- **Buddhism and the Beats with Professor Roger Jackson** ~See Buddhism
- **Psychedelic Art Therapy Talk with Michigan Psychedelic Society** ~See Healing
- **Solo Exhibition of Simon Ha's Paintings** ~See Art and Craft
- **Farm to Table Community Dinner Series**. ~ See Nutrition and Food Medicine
- **Ancestors: The Power Within with Judy Liu Ramsey** ~ See Shamanism
- **Appleumpkin Festival & Kapnicks Apple Festival** ~See Fairs and Festivals
- **Advent Blessings, Full of Grace with Miriam Brown** ~ See Retreats
- **Winter Solstice Lighting of the Fire with Sister Esther Kennedy** ~See Ceremonies, Celebrations, and Rituals
- **Sages of Ann Arbor, Crazy Wisdom's Fall Salon Series** ~See inside front cover ad

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

September through December 2024

Breathwork

Guided Group Breathwork with Jackie Miller • Sunday, September 1 & 15, October 6 & 20, November 3 & 17, December 1 & 15 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • First and third Sundays. A group session of gentle, connected breathing and breath holds with music, guided by Jackie Miller, certified breathwork facilitator. Experience the power of activated breath energy and learn a variety of supportive breathing techniques. FREE, donations welcome. Registration required. For more information visit thisbreath.com.

Buddhism

Meditation sitting with Various Presenters • Sundays • 10 to 11:30 a.m. • Non guided silent meditation followed by sharing or dharma talk. FREE. For more information contact Kenneth at (734) 678-0264.

Jewel Heart Sunday Talks: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Times with Demo Rinpoche • September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, October 6, 13, 20, 27, November 3, 10, 17, 24, December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. • Join Demo Rinpoche for weekly Sunday morning public talks on a variety of topics that are suitable for newcomers and long-timers alike, followed by a facilitated group discussion based on the morning talk. On the first Sunday of the month, Rinpoche presents the Jataka Tales, stories from the Buddha's previous lives. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Practical Buddhism with Gelek Rimpoche • Tuesday, September 3, 10, 17, 24, October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, November 5, 26, December 3, 10, 17 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • "Practical Buddhism" offers video recordings of earlier teachings by Gelek Rimpoche as an opportunity for some to revisit and as an introduction for others. A panel discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors follows each session. Discussions are not recorded. The sessions review Gelek Rimpoche's 2012 Sunday talks and into early 2013. Online only. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

The Bodhisattva's Way of Life: Chapter 6 Beginning with Patience with Demo Rinpoche • Thursday, September 5, 12, 19, 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • Shantideva's Bodhisattva's Way of Life is among the most beloved and inspiring works in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. In it, Shantideva gives detailed instructions on the benefits and methods of living in accordance with the bodhisattva ideals of unselfishly helping others. This series focuses on chapter 6 - patience. Online or in person. Free, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Meditation Workshop with Khenpo Tshering Chophel • Saturday, September 7, 14, 21, 28, October 5, 12, 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23, December 7, 14, 21,& 28 • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. • Buddhist monk Khenpo Chophel teaches new meditation techniques, leads meditation, and facilitates discussion about people's meditation practice. FREE; donations welcome. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

Buddhism and the Beats with Professor Roger Jackson • Saturday, September 14 • 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • This workshop focuses on the place of Buddhism in the lives and poetry of seven Beat authors: Jack Kerouac, Philip Whalen, Gary Snyder, Diane di Prima, Bob Kaufman, Joanne Kyger, and Allen Ginsberg, situating the Beats within American literary and religious history and exploring their works' approach to Buddhism. $75 Jewel Heart Members/$90 Non-Members. Pay what you can - No one turned away. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Dharma Talk with Khenpo Chophel • Saturday, September 7, 21, October 5, November 2, 16, & December 7, 21 • 12 to 1:00 p.m. • Dharma talks cover a wide range of topics in Buddhism, with opportunity for group discussion. A good way to get acquainted with Karuna Buddhist Center and Khenpo Chophel. Topics will be announced closer to each date and can be found on our website and Facebook page. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

GOM Day of Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • Saturday, September 28 • 9 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. • Meditation is an essential tool that helps develop peace and joy, as well as the power to deeply understand wisdom. The day includes a practice session with light guidance. Instructors available for your assistance. Silence will be enjoyed throughout the day. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Three Yanas Fall Meditation Retreat with Khenpo Tshering Chophel • Friday, October 18 & Saturday, October 19 • 7:00 p.m. Friday to 7:00 p.m. Saturday • Participants will learn about and practice three meditation techniques found in the three yanas or vehicles of Buddhism: Shamatha (calm-abiding), Tonglen (sending and receiving), and visualization meditation. Retreatants can stay overnight at the retreat center or off-site. $75, + additional for Friday night stay and meals if desired. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

Ceremonies, Celebrations, and Rituals

Sacred Savings Immersion Event with Michaelene Ruhl • Ongoing • With gratitude, we extend an exclusive offer to harmonize with the vibrant energy around us. Enjoy a 15% discount on all Plant Spirit Medicine packages through December 2024. Secure your savings and reserve your session by paying a deposit by August 31, 2024. Embark on your healing journey today. For more information contact Michaelene at michaelene@constellationhealingarts.com or visit constellationhealingarts.com. Price dependent on packaging.

Sunday Celebration with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Sunday, September 1 through December 29 • 10:45 a.m. to Noon. • Each Sunday, in person and on Zoom, we explore universal truths from all spiritual paths. Donations gratefully accepted. For more information, visit interfaithspirit.org.

INAI: A Space Apart Ritual Closing with the Weber Center • Wednesday, September 4 • 2:00 p.m. • INAI: A Space Apart is in a time of transition as we close the current location next to Weber Center and move to the Madden Hall Building on the motherhouse campus. We look forward to opening a new art gallery and reading room in the near future. These openings will be announced in the Weber Newsletter. FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Autumn Equinox with Sister Esther Kennedy • Sunday, September 22 • 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. • Harvesting the gifts of the ancestors. Each of us comes from people who were once indigenous. We gather in circle to honor and celebrate them in song, story, and dance. FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Dances of Universal Peace to Celebrate Winter Solstice with Susan Slack • Friday, December 13 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • The Dances of Universal Peace is an interactive, moving meditation practice. Certified leaders share simple chants from Earth's sacred traditions that we sing while moving gently to live music. Joyful, contemplative, and community building. All welcome. $10 suggested donation. For more information contact Susan at peaceinacircle@gmail.com or visit DancesofUniversalPeace.org.

Winter Solstice Lighting of the Fire with Sister Esther Kennedy • Sunday, December 22 • 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. • Calling forth the wisdom of the ancestors. On this darkest night of the year, we listen and give voice to ancestral wisdom held lovingly within darkness and flames of fire. We gather in circle, sing and dance with hearts full of gratitude and love. FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Channeling

Remembering Wholeness, Darshan with Barbara Brodsky & the Mother • Sunday, September 29, October 27, November 24, December 15 • 2 to 5:00 p.m. • The Mother, channeled by Barbara Brodsky offers group and personal messages helping to gently release and reveal places where people are

Lucinda Kurtz, M.A. and Oran Hesterman, Ph.D., will be leading the first Sages of Ann Arbor, Crazy Wisdom Salon Series. They'll be discussing Age-ing to Sage-ing: Harvesting the Wisdom of our Years in the Celestial Lounge at Crazy Wisdom on Thursday, September 12, from 7 to 9:00 p.m. See the calendar listing under the heading "Salons" on page 98 for more information.

Kurtz is a Brennan Healing Science Practitioner, ritualist, writer, and poet.

Hesterman is Founder of Fair Food Network and a ceramic artist. Both are Certified Sage-ing® Mentors who help people discover their life's wisdom and explore their soul's journey.

a little bit stuck. They reveal themselves when held deeply with love. Suggested donation: $10-$30-single; $40-$120-all. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Evenings with Aaron with Barbara Brodsky • Wednesday, October 10, 30, December 11 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Evenings with Aaron meets once a month. All are welcome. Aaron has met with us regularly since 1989. In this gathering, Aaron often will address a present world issue and how we can best support the resolution of this issue from a place of loving awareness. Suggested donation: $10-$30-single; $30-$90-all. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Children and Young Adults

Finding Your Mind-Body Rhythm with Robin Lily Goldberg • Monday, December 9 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • This workshop offers an oasis to adolescents ages 13-18. Through attuning to our thoughts, emotions, sensations, and environments, we'll rediscover our natural rhythms leading to intrinsic sources of support and delight. By embracing these resources, we can release stress, ride the waves of change, and enjoy the journey. $20. For more information contact Robin at robinlily@outlook.com.

Death and Dying

Death Café with Rev. Annie Kopko and Susan Thompson • Tuesdays, September 3, October 1, November 5, December 3 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • A discussion group—rather than a grief-support group or counseling session—with no agenda, objectives, or themes. Meets on ZOOM. FREE, donations gratefully accepted. For more information, visit interfaithspirit.org.

Ann Arbor Virtual Death Café with Rachel Briggs • Saturday, September 7, October 5, November 11, December 7 • Join us in-person for conversation about all things related to death and dying. This is not a grief support group, rather a "death positive" event. Participants join in small and large group discussion with deep listening and sharing from the heart. No agenda, no presentation. Hosted on ZOOM. For more information contact thedyingyear@gmail.com.

Ypsilanti Death Café with Acacia End of Life Services • Saturday, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14 • 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. • The objective of Death Cafes is to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives. It's a group-directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives, or themes. It is a discussion group rather than a grief support or counseling session. FREE, donations welcome. For more information visit bloodrootherbshop.com.

Ann Arbor Death Café with Rachel Briggs, Diana Cramer & Merilynne Rush • Saturday, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 21 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • After a 4½ year hiatus, we meet again at Crazy Wisdom on the third Saturday of every month in the Meeting Room! Join us in-person for conversation about all things related to death and dying. This is not a grief support group, rather a "death positive" event. Participants join in small and large group discussion with deep listening and sharing from the heart. No agenda, no presentation. Coffee available; bring your own snack. FREE. For more info visit DeathCafe.com.

I hope I can be the autumn leaf, who looked at the sky and lived. And when it was time to leave, gracefully it knew life was a gift.

—Dodinsky

The Dying Year End-of-life Doula Training with Merilynne Rush • Friday, October 18, 25, November 1, 8, 15, 22• 1 to 4:30 p.m. • Are you called to help others during dying and death? Learn from a hospice nurse and experienced end-of-life doulas from diverse backgrounds. 100-page study guide includes resources and info on how to set up a business. No prior experience necessary. We emphasize cultural humility, understanding our biases, and reducing health disparities. Held on Zoom. $725; scholarships and payment plans are available. For more information email Merilynne at thedyingyear@gmail.com.

Advance Care Planning Facilitator Training with Merilynne Rush • Monday, November 11 • 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Learn how to assist healthy adults in identifying a healthcare advocate, discuss their values and wishes with them, and complete an Advance Directive through the Respecting Choices model, an internationally recognized and evidence-based ACP program. For nurses, doctors, social workers, chaplains, administrators, end-of-life doulas, and all healthcare professionals across the continuum of care. Advance registration is required. $265 includes online study modules. For more information contact Merilynne at (734) 395-9660, or email thedyingyear@gmail.com.

Drumming

Drummunity Drum Circle with Lori Fithian • Wednesday, September 18 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join in for some "Drummunity" with Lori Fithian--a drum circle with a focus on fun and community-building. She'll bring the drums and YOU

You Are Not Broken:

The Deeper Journey of Mindfulness

By Nikki Nanos

"I'll never give up on you, don't *you* give up on you."

These words from Mitra Manesh, Mindfulness Educator, Thought Leader, and my mentor, have stayed with me through my growth and journey into the world of mindfulness and meditation practices. In 2020, I sat in on a webinar with this teacher whom I had never heard of. Upon listening to her deep inner wisdom, I knew immediately I had to study with her.

All my life I've searched for answers, from self-help books, to videos on conquering self-limiting beliefs and power posing, to classes on finding your purpose. How do you get over not only your self-limiting beliefs, but change those other parts of you that seem to recycle the dis-ease of unhappiness, reactivity, and the feeling of always having to prove yourself to others? The list seemed endless from fear of success, to finding escapes in alcohol, gambling—I was looking for love in all the wrong things and people.

Knowing there was something bigger, greater, and magical that most never venture to find, I kept searching for it—whatever "it" was. How many of you are searching and keep trying new things? Some may work for a while, but then you find yourself right back into old, unfruitful patterns.

When the pandemic hit in 2020, I was 67 years young. The world paused. This in turn helped me pause and enter into a deeper search for inner peace, my search to find *me*. It was the beginning of that year when I found The School of Positive Transformation's (SPT) Meditation & Mindfulness Teacher Training online and seriously started down this road. Without the "normal" daily distractions, I was very focused in my studies.

When thinking back on my many first attempts at meditation, I couldn't meditate for even one minute without my monkey mind hopping from tree to tree. Finally, with patience and perseverance, I learned to calm my thinking mind, which gave way to deeper experiences in meditation.

The combination of Mitra's and SPT's trainings brought me to that magical world I always knew existed. The magic happens when you tap into your inner wisdom—your heart and soul. Like a child discovering something new for the first time … the discoveries, those *aha* moments, are just as exciting today as they were when I first started. The depth of this training has been the most fascinating, beneficial, and life changing experience.

During the pandemic years, I pulled out my old journals, and though I had the knowledge of all the dis-ease in my life, I had never reached the inner knowings of it. Looking back, what I wrote in my journals was a cry for the help that no one knew how to give me. I didn't know how to heal myself.

I recall decades ago, going to a psychologist just so I'd have someone to talk to, and her saying, after sharing some of my journal writings back in the 80's, "You don't need me, you are your own psychologist." Yes, writing down my inner most thoughts and feelings was helpful. Yet, we are rarely taught how to stop the ruminating and worrying. These habits hurt us, but mindfulness gave me the tools to stop.

It was a few years before 2020 that I felt myself being pulled into this spiritual journey. When that nagging in my gut got loud and shouted, "You need to change. The time is *now*." I could either stay in the same unhealthy patterns, or as was obvious in my journals, get my shit together and find the *me* inside of me.

Once I started on the journey, I could feel my consciousness growing. I was stumbling forward instead of being stuck in the past thoughts of, "I'm not good enough; I don't have the money; I am worth less than others." The mindfulness practices led me to a huge breakthrough in all these areas.

One major breakthrough came while looking at my feminine and masculine energies. We all have feminine and masculine energy in us, and mine were *so* out of balance. My masculine energy was very dominant—he thought he was protecting my feminine inner child. He tried to speak up on my behalf when I was bullied in school. It was his voice that spoke through me when I made jokes about myself, so no one could see my real pain. This self-deprecation, along with the fact that I grew up in a Greek family where the boys were revered, made me think that if I did "boy" things, like playing all kinds of sports, I would finally get some attention. My masculine energy always got me back on my feet as I learned to just tough things out. Mindfulness brought to my attention, that I needed to get in touch with my feminine energy to build more balance in my life.

The first inner child I met was my little girl self who I named Rawly (Raw Awakening Work Loving Yourself). She was in a cave, cold, lonely, and dirty, in a little red dress with white lace and black patent leather Mary Janes. Our first meeting (which took place while meditating) went like this:

Rawly slowly walked out of the cave, head down.

"Hi," I said gently to this injured child.

Very shyly, softly, and with a little fear, she replied, "Hi." We stayed in silence for a moment then she began to cry. "I'm sorry I messed up your life."

My heart sank. Tears welled up in my eyes. "You didn't mess up my life, I did. I'm the adult here." I reached with open arms to Rawly, and we tightly held each other with love and sobbed.

It took time to work with this inner child. I had to build the trust that she would always be a part of me, and together we could overcome this feeling of worth-less-ness to grow together.

It took time to work with this inner child. I had to build the trust that she would always be a part of me, and together we could overcome this feeling of worth-less-ness to grow together.

I finally found the right teacher, and the right tools, and I am forever grateful to my teacher who never gave up on me, even through all of my mis-takes. Her support allowed me to hold compassionate space for myself and others. It allowed me to accept and truly understand the phrase, "You are not broken." The pieces are all there in us… just sometimes in the wrong place.

While people around me were struggling with the pandemic, I was having the best healing time of my life. Does it matter where you are at in life or how old you are? Never—it's never too late to change. It's simply a choice.

All of this brought me to wanting to serve others on their journey to grow. My teaching and coaching are from a heart-centered, intuitive, creative, and energetic perspective. If you want fast answers, sure I can help, but if you want a life changing experience, to let go of self-limiting beliefs, to get in touch with who you really are, to begin healing from childhood dis-ease, and let go of the fear, that is the journey that lights me up. To give a client, a group, not the answers, but the space to find their own inner wisdom, the trust and confidence that will expand their growth in consciousness through self-awareness and compassion, is not only what I'm about, it's my "why" in life.

Nikki Nanos is a Mindfulness & Meditation Teacher/Trainer, coach, and speaker with over 750 hours of mindfulness studies. Her certified MIndfulness Teacher/Training comes from both The School of Positive Transformation and The Dallas Yoga Studio. Nanos's credentials as a Mindfulness Coach are from the Mindful Attentionist Coaching Program (MAC) with her mentor and teacher Mitra Manesh. She has certification in Integrative Coaching from The School of Positive Transformation and Somatic Mindful Coaching from Mindful Coach Method. Nanos lives in Waterford, MI. Learn more about Nanos at nikkinanos.com.

get to play them! All ages are welcome to this family-friendly, "good clean fun" event! No experience necessary! FREE. For more information contact Lori at (734) 426-7818 or email lorifithian@mac.com.

Energy and Healing

Imaginary Friend Revival Individual Playshop with Debra Metler • TBD by Client • Imaginary Friend Revival Individual Playshops can help enhance your imagination and creativity. You will attend four, one hour, one on one, interactive Playshops on Google Meet with Debra Metler MSW, CHC. You will explore the concept of the Imaginary Friend and the role that playfulness can have in your daily life. $185 for four one-hour sessions. For more information contact Debra at (248) 819-2131, email debmetler@gmail.com, or visit guffaw.square.site.

> Your talent determines what you can do. Your motivation determines how much you're willing to do. Your attitude determines how well you do it.
>
> —Lou Holtz

Wild Goose Chi Kung with Master Wasentha Young • Tuesdays, September 10 through December 10 from 6 to 7:00 p.m. AND/OR Thursdays, September 12 through December 12 from 10 to 11:00 a.m. • The Wild Goose Form, is a series of interconnecting movements that embodies the multidimensional interaction of energies. The continuous movement form includes imagery, stretching, touching accupoints; connecting with universe, nature, and earth energies. Classes are in-person. $215. For more information contact Peaceful Dragon School at (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

Healing & Ascension Monthlies Classes with Rev. Eve Wilson • Thursday, September 12, October 10, November 7, December 5 • 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. • Raise your vibration into unity with your own Higher Self to heal body, mind, soul, and ascend. Learn to live in a new world of unconditional love. Release judgment and fear and discover your true purpose. Available by teleconference call and recorded; supported by skilled world healing ascension workers. $300 for a series of six. For more information contact Eve at (734) 780-7635, email evew@spiritualhealers.com, or visit spiritualhealers.com.

Gentle Qigong with Rory Walsh • Saturdays from September 14 through December 14 • 11 a.m. to Noon • This harmonizing flow of head-to-toe movement, meditation, and self-acupressure helps you to center yourself and navigate the changing seasons. A fun self-care practice for all ages and experience levels. $120. For more information contact Peaceful Dragon School at (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

Energy and Healing continued...

A Physician's Journey: Yoga and Meditation to Holistic Medicine: Using the Philosophy of Raja Yoga as a Medical/Health Care Model with Dr. Dennis Chernin • Wednesday, November 13 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Dr. Chernin has actively practiced and taught meditation and breathing techniques worldwide for over forty years based upon the ancient teachings of Tantra, Vedanta, and Samkhya philosophies. He is a certified yoga teacher and the author of several books, the most recent being *A Physician's Journey: Yoga and Meditation to Holistic Medicine*. He also wrote *How to Meditate Using Chakras, Mantras, and Breath* (with audio CD of guided meditation) and *The Complete Homeopathic Resource for Common Illnesses*. Hosted in the Crazy Wisdom Celestial room. For more information contact Bill at billz@crazywisdom.net.

Energy Medicine & Nervous System Balancing with Mary Light • Thursday, December 5 & Friday, December 6 • 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Approaches such as Polarity Therapy, Cranial Sacral Balancing, Chiropractic, Marma, and Reflexology have evolved within the bodywork professional for at least 6 decades. This is a hands-on workshop to experience and explore several sessions and their outcomes and benefits. 16 CE. $250. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794, email nshaassociates@gmail.com, or visit naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.

Festivals and Fairs

Enlightened Soul 2-Day Psychic Fair with the Enlightened Soul Center • Saturday & Sunday, September 7, 8, & 21, 22, October 5, 6 & 19, 20, November 2, 3 & 16, 17, Dec 7, 8 &21, 22 • Saturday Noon to 6:00 p.m., & Sunday Noon to 5:00 p.m.• Join us for a fun-filled day at the Enlightened Soul Center! We have a selection of readers and healers for your enjoyment, along with visiting vendors for shopping! A great way to explore a variety of readings and healings at one time, under one roof: intuitive tarot & oracle card readings, psychic readings, mediums, and spirit art drawings. Prices of readings vary based on type and practitioner. Cost of admission: Saturday $5, Sunday $3. For more information contact Amy Garber, (734) 358-0218, email amy@enlightenedsoulcenter.com, or visit enlightenedsoulcenter.com.

Appleumpkin Festival & Kapnicks Apple Festival • Saturday, October 11 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. & Sunday, October 12 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm • Antiques, art, and flea market, entertainment, food trucks, and crafts galore. Children's area, carnival rides and more! Shuttle buses available between venues. FREE. For more information visit downtowntehcumseh.com.

Film

Film & Discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors • Friday, September 13, October 11, December 13 • 7 to 9:15 p.m. • September 13: The Life and Times of Allen Ginsberg. 2013. The story of Allen Ginsburg, one of America's greatest poets and a leader of the Beat Generation. October 11: Hector and the Search for Happiness. 2014. After disillusioned psychiatrist Hector confesses to his girlfriend that he feels like a fraud, he embarks on an international quest to find the right formula to bring him joy and increase his vitality. December 13: The Civilization of Maxwell Bright. 2005. After a series of bad relationships, a man orders a mail-order bride and receives more than he bargained for. FREE. Concessions available. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Healing

Psychedelic Art Therapy Talk with Michigan Psychedelic Society • Sunday, September 15 • 1 to 3:00 p.m. • Michigan Psychedelic Society hosts Jacqueline and Cassius Drake to discuss the cross between psychedelic therapy and art therapy in a paradigm called "The Way of the Butterfly." They will discuss their overall approach to psychedelic integration including creative work as well as virtual reality, mindfulness, and meditation. FREE. For more information contact Julie at (720) 560-5292, email mipsychedelicsociety@gmail.com, or visit mipsychedelicsociety.org.

Healing through Connecting Constellations Workshop with Michaelene Ruhl • Saturday, October 19, November 16, December 14 • 1 to 6:00 p.m. • In our journey through life, we are intricately connected to everything. Healing through Connecting Constellations (HCC) helps re-establish those connections. Held in a sacred, compassionate space, each HCC experience offers profound healing. It provides a meaningful avenue for reconnection to love, life, and Self. $185 or $165 14 days before. For more information contact Michaelene at michaelene@constellationhealingarts.com or visit constellationhealingarts.com.

Herbal Medicine

Herbal Medicine Class & Certification Series with Mary Light • Saturday, September 21, October 19, 26, November 2, 16, December 21 • 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. • Lively and informative herbal medicine workshop covering topics such as winter medicine making, immune system approaches, apothecary inventory, herbal actions, September field ID skills and more. This is an ongoing class welcoming fall enrollees for the dates listed! $800 for the certification series. $150 for individual classes. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794, email nshaassociates@gmail.com, or visit naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.

On September 1, 2024, The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal will be availble on our website: crazywisdomjournal.com.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

September through December 2024

Holistic Health

Reawakening the Mind-Body-Mother Earth Connection with Robin Lily Goldberg • Mondays, September 16, 23, 30 • 6 to 7:00 p.m. • This experiential series explores our vastness and interconnectedness. From reflexology to polyvagal theory, we'll rediscover how inner networks like the nervous system communicate with the natural world. By tracing our ties to the Earth, we can remember our wholeness and revive our sense of belonging. $45. For more information contact Robin at robinlily@outlook.com.

Intuitive and Psychic Development

Focused Mind Meditation: Teleconference with John Friedlander • Sunday, September 1, October 6, November 3, December 1 • 9:00 a.m. to Noon • Development of sustained focused meditation makes it easy to develop a whole new magnitude of psychic skill and healing ability, as well as a new level of mental clarity and spiritual openness. See website for phone and payment information. $15. For more information contact Violeta at (734) 476-1513 or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Psychic Psychology Women's Group: Teleconference with John Friedlander • Tuesday, September 3, October 1, November 5, December 3 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • For women only. Meditations concentrating on women's issues relative to biological energies as well as that of the aura. $10. For more information contact Violeta at (734) 476-1513 or visit psychicpsychology.org.

October Intensive with John Friedlander: Webinar & Teleconference with John Friedlander • Saturday, October 12 & Sunday October 13, 10 a.m. to Noon and 2 to 4:00 p.m., Monday, October 14 through Friday, October 18, 7 to 9:00 p.m., Saturday, October 19 & Sunday October 20, 10:00 a.m. to Noon, and 2 to 4:00 p.m. • Deep sustained meditation and training, spending considerable time on each of the seven major chakras from a clairvoyant technical perspective. Continued study of information presented in previous intensives. $275. For more information contact Gilbert at gchoud@yahoo.com or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Massage

Foot Reflexology Training and Certification with Mary Light • Thursday, September 5 & Friday, September 6 • 9:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. • A hands-on, thorough two-day workshop training, with 16 massage professionals, open to anyone. Includes theory, manual techniques, contra-indications, and practice of the Foot Reflexology healing art. $250. For more information contact the School of Massage, Herbal, and Natural Medicine at (734) 769-7794, email nshaassociates@gmail.com, or visit naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.

Lymphatic Massage Training for 20.5 Certification with Rachel Perry Gilbertson • Saturday, November 9 & Sunday, November 10 • 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Requires the online 4.5 pre-study. Includes Myofascial Lymphatic Drainage - (Level 1) and the introduction to Myofascial Lymphatic Drainage home study. $530. For more information contact Rachel at (608) 290-4828 or visit pumplymph.com.

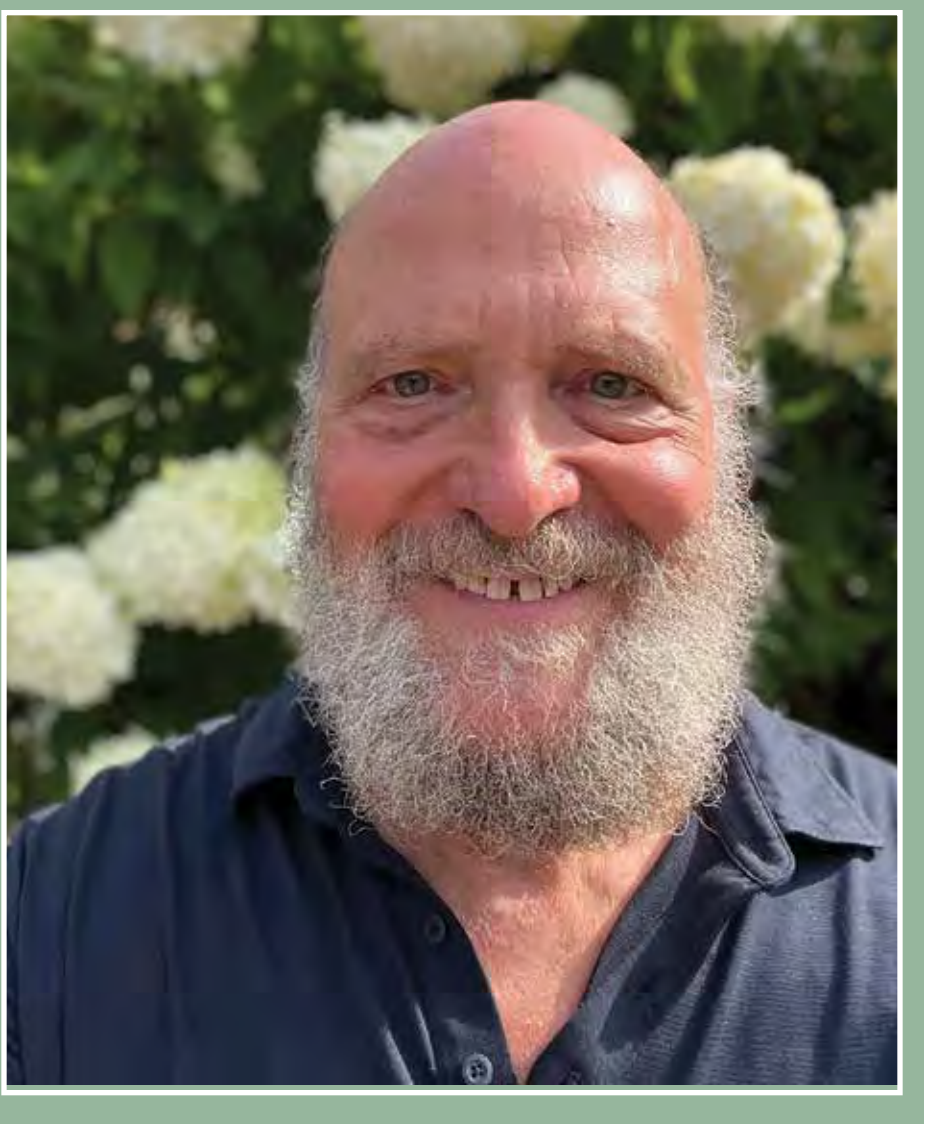
Meditation

Weekly Silent Meditation with Celeste Zygmont • Ongoing Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to Noon & Tuesdays from 9 to 9:30 a.m. • We will have a brief period of chanting, then mute ourselves, and then begin silent vipassana meditation. After the hour is finished a bell will ring and meditators can go on with their day. There will be time to stay and chat or discuss questions if someone so chooses. Please note this is not a class or a guided meditation. Donation-based. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

White Tara Guided Healing Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, October 6, 13, 20, 27, November 3, December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 • 9:30 to 10:35 a.m. • Tara is the mother goddess of Tibetan Buddhism, known for her quick and compassionate activity. White Tara is particularly associated with healing and long life. These guided meditations use visualization techniques to overcome physical, mental, and emotional suffering. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-338, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Dr. Jay Sandweiss, D.O., is board certified by the American Osteopathic Association in neuro-musculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine. He is also board certified in medical acupuncture by the American Board of Medical Acupuncture. Dr. Sandweiss is extensively trained in the fields of Osteopathy, Applied Kinesiology, Functional Medicine, and Chinese Medicine. He's been teaching nationally and internationally for decades. 7 Cylinders Studio filmed and produced 10 unique instructional/ teaching videos for Dr. Sandweiss that exemplify his approach to patient care for all body regions, and they are available through his website, doctorjaysandweiss.com.

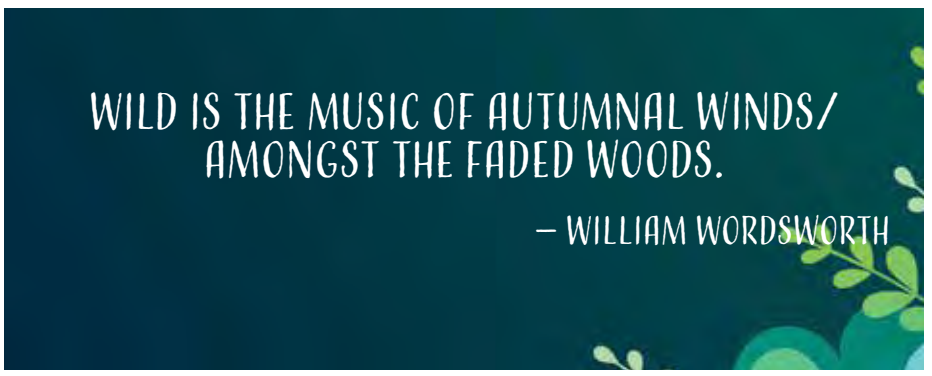
Join Dr. Sandweiss and moderator Bill Zirinsky in the Celestial Lounge on Thursday, November 21 from 7 to 9:00 p.m. See the calendar listing under the heading "Salons" on page 99 for more information.



Community Sound Bath with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, September 6, October 4, December 6 & Sunday, October 6 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this sound bath meditation where he will use singing bowls, our large collection of gongs, and more to create a gentle soundscape perfect for deep relaxation and peace. Yoga mats and one yoga blanket are provided for each attendee. Please bring any additional supports desired. $40, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

A Day of Mindfulness—The Myth of Permanence with Sister Esther Kennedy • Saturday, September 7 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. • What we experience each day is dependent on many causes and conditions. We have a thought, follow it for a while, and then another thought arises. We experience a particular emotion or mood and then it dissolves, and another emotion arises. Together we can uncover, be surprised, and begin to shift some of our habitual patterns of mind. $35, registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Healing and Compassion Meditations with Hartmut Sagolla • Monday, September 9, 23, 30, October 7, 14, 21, 28, November 4, 25, December 2, 9, 16. • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Hartmut Sagolla leads a 30–40-minute guided meditation on a Buddhist theme followed by discussion. Meditations are centered around healing oneself and others and developing compassion. They include concentrated meditation, visualization, and contemplative meditations. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-338, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.



Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Complimentary Orientation with Brenda Lindsay • Wednesday, September 11 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • Learn about the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) evidence-based in this eight-week program starting on September 18th and determine whether it is a fit for you. MBSR was created by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD in 1979 at the UMass Medical Center to optimize one's ability to face stress, pain, and illness and make sustainable change across one's lifetime. FREE. For more information contact Brenda Lindsay at Brenda@mindtransformationsllc.com or visit mindtransformationsllc.com.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Eight-Week Series with Brenda Lindsay • Wednesday, Sept 18, 25, October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, & November 6 • 6:30 to 9:00 p.m., all day October 20 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • If you want to reduce stress, anxiety, or depression, and possibly change habitual reactivity patterns, this may be the series for you. Connect in real-time with others who are seeking greater balance, ease, and peace of mind. Eight-Week Series Fees: $220.00, $325.00, or $430.00 suggested sliding scale, "pay what you can" pricing. For more information contact Brenda Lindsay at Brenda@mindtransformationsllc.com or visit mindtransformationsllc.com.

Resonant Relaxation (Daytime Sound Bath) with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Wednesday, September 18 & November 13 • 10:00 to 11:00 a.m • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this sound bath meditation where he will use singing bowls, our large collection of gongs, and more to create a gentle soundscape perfect for deep relaxation and peace. Yoga mats and one yoga blanket are provided for each attendee. Please bring any additional supports desired. $40, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Introduction to Mindful Self-Compassion Online with Paulette Grotrian • Thursday, September 19, 26, October 3, & 10 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Learn to be kind to yourself by cultivating healthy ways to manage difficult emotions, reduce stress and anxiety, and strengthen your own inner goodness. This series, based on the work of renowned Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer, is about building emotional resources to deal with life's difficulties during these uncertain times. $125. For more information contact Paulette at (734) 276-7707, email mindfulnesswithpaulette@gmail.com, or visit mindfulnesswithpaulette.weebly.com.

The Bodhichitta Course with Robert Jacobs • Thursday, September 19, October 24, November 21, & December 19 • Bodhichitta—the desire to awaken for the good of all beings—is described in Tibetan Buddhism as the foundation for the spiritual path. Our course will be a discussion group in which we will all participate in sharing what it is that motivates us in pursuing our spiritual path. Suggested donation: $80-$240. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer Kukan and Breathe Yoga • Friday, September 20 & November 8, or Tuesday, December 31 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Relax, unwind, and allow yourself to calm the overworked, overstimulated nervous system, by allowing the healing frequencies of sound to flow through you. Sound Bath Meditation is an immersion in soothing sounds and vibrations that are relaxing and rejuvenating for your body, mind, and spirit. Fridays $28, Tuesday $35. For more information contact Amy at (734) 883-7427, email amy@breatheyogachelsea.com, or visit breatheyogachelsea.com.

Humans: Divine Co-creators in the Cosmos with Barbara Brodsky, Colette Simone, & Spirit Friends • Saturday, September 21, November 2, & December 7 • 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. • This workshop reminds us that we are part of a multidimensional cosmos in which there are many other beings. Consider how we as humans can learn to understand and collaborate with others to bring the gifts of the human to this inter-cosmos collective, embracing the diversity and complexity of form. Suggested donation: single-$30-$110; all three workshops $90-$330. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Equinox Celebration Labyrinth Walk & Sound Bath with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, September 21 • 1 to 2:00 p.m. • Join Veriditas Certified Advanced Labyrinth Facilitator, Rob Meyer-Kukan in Saline for an Equinox Celebration, crystal bowl sound bath, and labyrinth walk! We will celebrate the equinox by enjoying 30 minutes of relaxing and soothing tones of singing bowls on the labyrinth. Suggested donation is $10 per person. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Introduction to Mindfulness with Libby Robinson • Saturday, September 21 • 2 to 4:30 p.m. • Virtual introduction to mindfulness, including definition, benefits of cultivating your practice, methods, and opportunities to practice. Will briefly describe more extensive opportunities to learn and practice mindfulness. $300, negotiable with teacher, depending on need. For more information contact Libby Robinson at (734) 476-3070, email libbyrobinson7@gmail.com, or visit libbyrobinsonmindfulness.com.

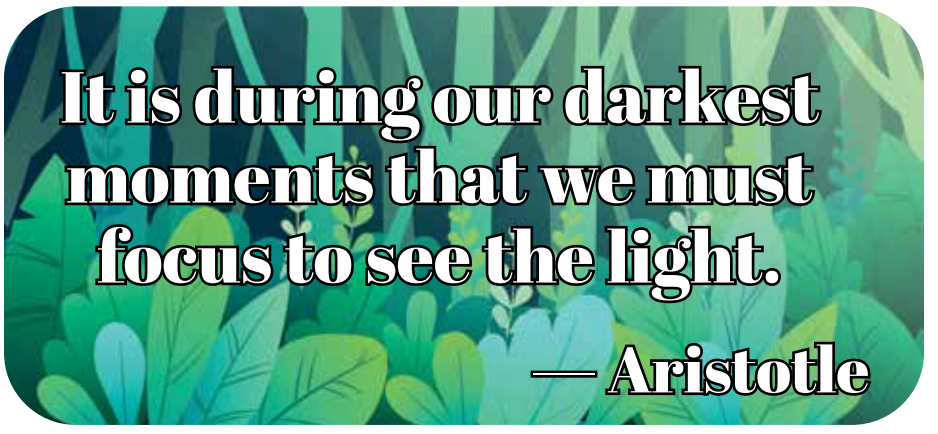
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction with Libby Robinson • Saturday, September 28, October 5, 12, 19, 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23 • 2 to 4:30 p.m. • The class focuses on practicing mindfulness, compassionate awareness of the present moment in class and between classes. It has been researched and found helpful with stress, pain, depression, anxiety, & chronic unhappiness. Participants learn through guided meditations, discussions, daily mindfulness practices and a half-day retreat. The course fee is $300 (fee negotiable), which includes recordings of guided meditations, handouts, and the retreat. For more information contact Libby Robinson at (734) 476-3070, email libbyrobinson7@gmail.com, or visit libbyrobinsonmindfulness.com.

A Day of Mindfulness: Coming to our Senses with Sister Esther Kennedy • Saturday, October 5 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. • Where the adventure of life is taking us moment by moment is unknown. The challenge, says Jon Kabat-Zinn, is coming to our senses, both individually and as a species. A first step in this adventure is the cultivation of a particular kind of awareness known as mindfulness; refined through the practice of mindfulness meditation. $35, registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Mastering Meditation with Kapila Castoldi • Sunday, September 22, 29, & October 6 • 2 to 4:00 p.m. • Introductory Meditation Series offered by the Sri Chinmoy Centre. Topics include concentration, relaxation, and breathing techniques; exploring meditation on the heart center; the awakening of inner awareness; the role of music and mantras. FREE. For more information contact Kapila at (734)994-7114, email castoldi@oakland.edu, or visit meditationannarbor.com.

Sound Bath Experience with Becca Hacket • Friday, September 27 AND/OR Friday, November 15 • 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. • Becca starts with accessible yoga poses. Then you'll settle in and enjoy the calming sounds and vibrations of the singing bowls, tuning forks, and a rain disk. She uses sound and her voice to help you wind down, get cleared, and energized. It is an amazing gift to yourself. This is a time for you to release stress and relax. $30. For more information contact the Mix Studios at (734) 845-9105, email hello@the-mix-studios.com, or visit the-mix-studios.com.

Finding Stillness in a Frantic World: Pathways to Achieving Inner Quiet with Carol Blotter • Saturday, September 28 • 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • We spend a gentle day, learning how to identify our triggers. Practice finding that sense of peace that we seek, while acknowledging the demands and sorrows of life. Stillness and quiet come from facing our challenges. Learn different practices for keeping our heart open to all the experiences of life, thus adding calm to your life and our world. $35, includes lunch, registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.



The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

Meditation Technology with Amy Hertz and Figen Lacin • Wednesday, Oct 9, 16, 23, 30 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Visualization uses analysis to create an image. It then utilizes concentrated meditation to firmly hold the image stable. By developing visualization techniques in meditation, the symbolism of the imagery takes root in the cognitive and emotional parts of the mind, resonates deeply, and connects with virtuous mental aspects. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-338, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Resonant Relaxation (Daytime Sound Bath) with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Thursday, October 17 & December 12 • 1 to 2:00 p.m. • Are you just plain busy? This hour-long sound bath is for you! Join sound therapist Rob Meyer-Kukan at 7 Notes Natural Health for this daytime sound bath for busy souls. Relax into a zero-gravity chair and float into this time of deep relaxation. $30, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Yoga + Sound with Rob Meyer-Kukan & Paul Barr • Saturday, October 19 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Join Sound Healer, Rob Meyer-Kukan and Yoga Instructor, Paul Barr for this heartfelt pairing of Yoga + Sound at 7 Notes Natural Health. Paul will lead a mindful yoga practice that focuses on deep relaxation and release. Rob will support with gentle sounds of singing bowls, gongs, and more. $40, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Candlelight Labyrinth Walk with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, October 25 • 6 to 7:00 p.m. • Join Veriditas trained Labyrinth Facilitator, Rob Meyer-Kukan for a candlelight labyrinth walk. Suggested donation $10/person. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Cacao + Sound with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, November 1 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for a special First Friday Community Sound Bath incorporating Cacao + Sound themed around remembering our ancestors! Rob will create an experience that will immerse you in peace and tranquility. Each participant will be supplied with a yoga mat and blanket. Please bring any additional supports desired. $40, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

A Day of Mindfulness: Lost in Thought with Sister Esther Kennedy • Saturday, November 2 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. • Have you noticed how your thinking mind draws you in and drags you along from thought to thought, weaving stories conditioned by the past? How easy it is for us to get trapped in our mind-made conceptual prisons. Underneath all the fluctuating thoughts and emotions, there is within each of us a dimension of consciousness far deeper than thought. $35, registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org

Sound Bath with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Sunday, November 10 • 7 to 8:15 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this sound bath meditation in downtown Plymouth. Rob will play metal and crystal singing bowls, with drums, chimes, and more washing you with sounds intended to bring calming vibrations to reduce stress and ease tension. Please bring a yoga mat and blanket and any additional supports desired. $40, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Acupuncture + Sound with Rob Meyer-Kukan & Lauren Hoffman • Sunday, November 17 • 3 to 4:30 p.m. • Rob from 7 Notes Natural Health will be joined by Lauren Hoffman from Whole-Self Wellness, LLC to share an afternoon of resonance and release. Relax into the tones of singing bowls, gongs, chimes, and more while receiving acupuncture. Yoga mats and yoga blankets will be provided. Please bring any additional supports desired. $50, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

A Day of Mindfulness: Cultivating Warmth of Heart with Sister Esther Kennedy • Saturday, December 7 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. • We can begin by choosing to be present. In silent moments we grow the courage to hear, with the heart-mind, the voice inside us connecting us to all beings and the whole web of life. We humans are at a crossroads and profoundly need one another as we cultivate hearts that are tender, discerning, compassionate, and deeply

Ann Arbor Holistic Resource Guide

Find a practitioner of holistic health, bodymind therapy, Buddhism, personal growth, spiritual development, and much more...

If you are a practitioner or business owner, list your business for free in our online guide!

Healing Awaits at AnnArborHolistic.com

Questions? Email annarborholistic@crazywisdom.net

One of Ann Arbor's modern-era renaissance women, Lisa Gottlieb has been a leader in the community for decades. The co-founder and Operations Director for Selma Café, she's been at the forefront of Ann Arbor's organic food and farm-to-table culture, and in more recent years she's been deeply involved in Nonviolent Communication, as a certified trainer, and as the Founder and Director of Compassionate Communication of Ann Arbor. She works with individuals, couples, and families through the lens of Nonviolent Communication to improve connection, reduce conflict, and make it easier to understand each other. She is currently writing a book called *Musings from a Snarky Empath: Life through the Lens of Nonviolent Communication*.

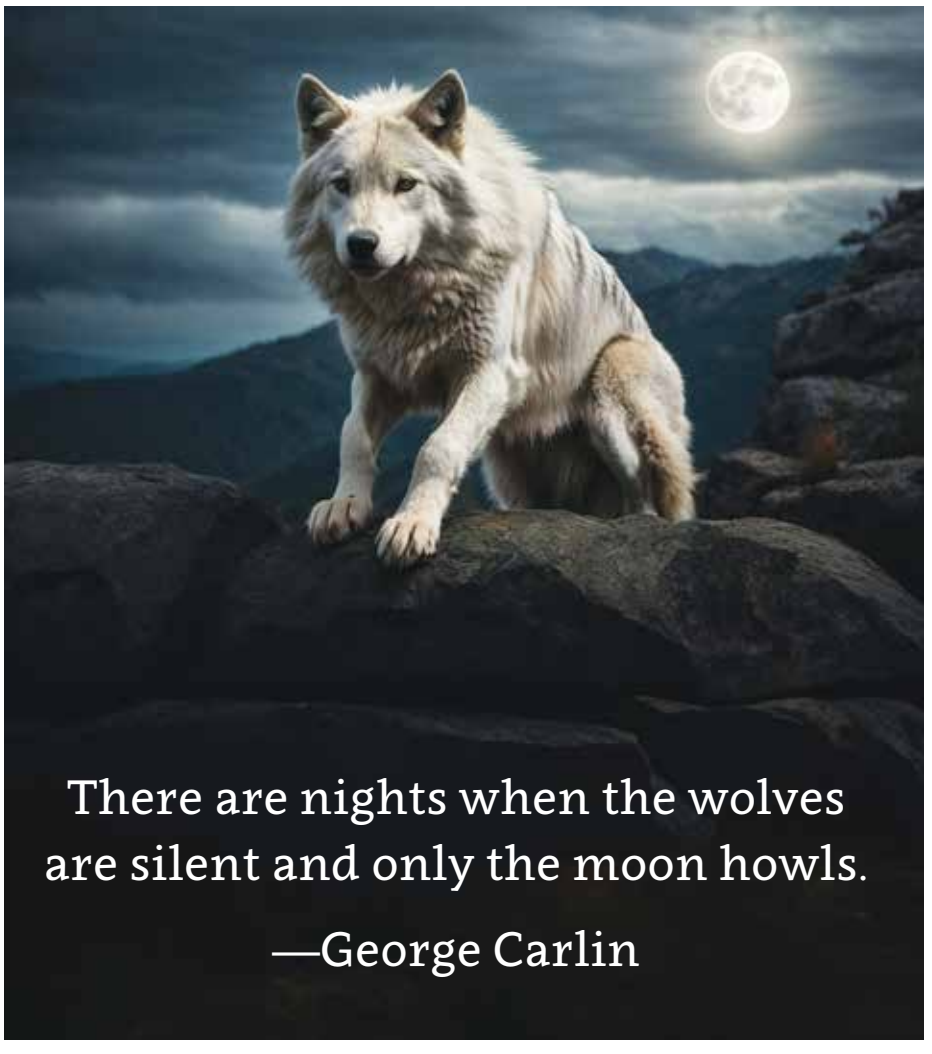
Join Lisa Gottlieb and moderator Bill Zirinsky in the Celestial Lounge on Thursday, October 10 from 7 to 9:00 p.m. See the calendar listing under the heading "Salons" on page 98 for more information.

loving. $35, registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Longest Night Celebration with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, December 21 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • This event will help us to celebrate the never-ending light within each of us. Seasonal imagery, healing sound (singing bowls, gongs, etc.), releasing ceremony, labyrinth walk, drumming, and more will create a unique and uplifting experience. Yoga mats and yoga blankets will be provided. Please bring any additional supports desired. Sliding Scale $25-40, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Multicultural Events

Hispanic History in Adrian Michigan with Ben Negron • Tuesday, September 17 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month in September, we invite local leader and activist, Ben Negron, to share with us the impactful history made by Hispanics in the Adrian area. The hope is to educate on the contributions made to our area by Hispanics as well as learn more about the rich and proud Hispanic culture. FREE. For more information contact Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.



Poverty's Intersectionality with Maureen Taylor • Thursday, November 19 • Time TBD • We have asked Professor Maureen Taylor to share with us how poverty impacts the communities we have been focusing on throughout the year, specifically; women, those with disabilities, and people of color. The hope is to educate about poverty's deep attraction to many marginalized communities and the impact it has on them. FREE. For more information contact Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Music, Sound, and Voice

Cafe 704 with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Second Saturdays • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Live music in a smoke- and alcohol-free venue, in person or livestream on Zoom. PATH (Sep. 14), Nutshell (Oct. 12), Paul Vornhagen & Aron Kaufman (Nov. 9), and Dorkestra (Dec. 14) $10. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

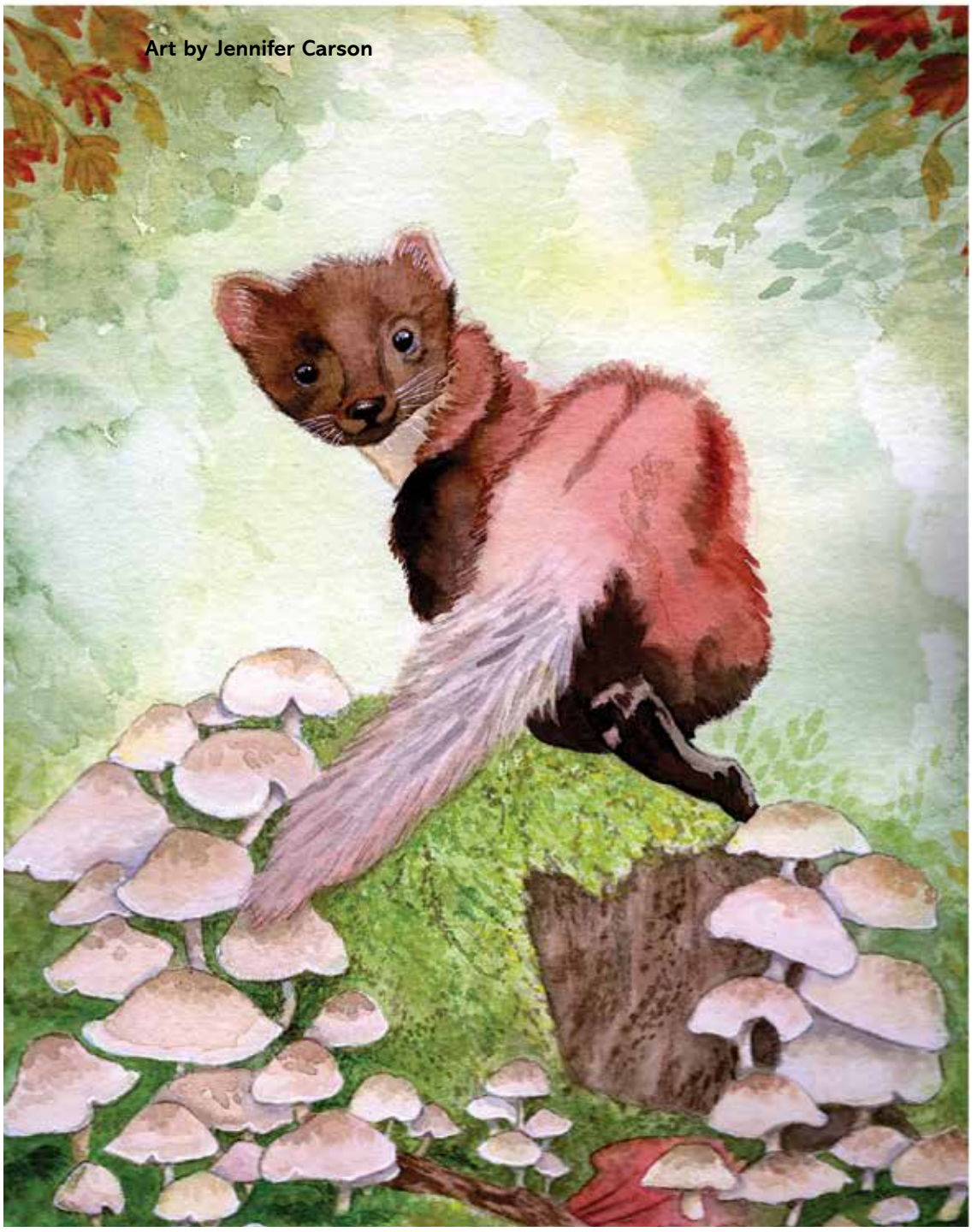
Sound Healing and Self Care with Jaime Lawrence & Kimberly Joy Rieli • Sunday, September 8 & November 3 • 3 to 5:00 p.m. An afternoon of self-care and nourishment for your body, mind, and soul. Participants will be led in an interactive experience of journaling, emotional freedom technique, gentle stretching, and nervous system healing, followed by a deeply restful sound healing journey. They'll drift away serenaded by crystal singing bowls, Celtic harp, flutes, gongs, drums, and Kimberly and Jaime's ethereal voices. Don't miss this opportunity to immerse yourself in a truly transformative afternoon of self-care and healing. Sliding scale suggested: $55, $44, or $33. Located at the Infinite Light Center, 1805 East Ganson Street, Jackson, MI 49202. For more information contact Jaime at (517) 416-1088, email jaime@hgmusictherapy.com, or visit hgmusictherapy.com, AND/OR Kimberly at (310) 502-9367, email info@singingforyoursoul.com, or visit singingforyoursoul.com.

Community Sing with Matt Watroba • Wednesday, September 11, October 9, November 13, December 11 • 7 to 8:15 p.m. • Matt leads a folk-music singalong with singers of all abilities. No experience necessary. May include other genres. Donations in any amount are appreciated. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org or mattwatroba.net.

Candlelight Meditation Concert of Sacred Songs & Healing Chants with Norma Gentile • Sunday, December 15 • 4 to 5:30 p.m. • Sacred Songs and medieval Healing Chants sung in full candlelight. Norma creates a colorful harmonic tapestry with singing bowls and audience toning, upon which she sings chants composed nearly a thousand years ago by the seer and saint, Hildegard of Bingen. Suggested donation of $20. For more information contact the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth (734) 327-0270 or visit HealingChants.com.

Naturopathy

Natural Medicine Certification Series with Mary Light • Thursday, October 19 & 26 • 11 to 11:30 a.m. • Presentation to launch our Natural Medicine Certification Series which will begin in January 2025, to give information to prospective participants. FREE. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794, email nshaassociates@gmail.com, or visit naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.



Art by Jennifer Carson

Nutrition and Food Medicine

Farm to Table Community Dinner Series with Washtenaw Meats & Jolly Pumpkin Artisan Ales + Kitchen • Tuesday, September 24, October 29, November 26 • 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. • Join us the last Tuesday of the month for an evening of good food, great company, and a celebration of the farm-to-table ethos, where each dish tells a story of local agriculture, sustainability, and culinary passion. Menu is developed based on seasonality and availability. Children free with paying adult. $35. For more information contact Sarah Schloss at (413) 548-4444, email eat@washtenawmeats.com, or visit washtenawmeats.com.

Pagan Spirituality

Witches Night Out with Moira Payne • Wednesday, September 4, October 2, November 6, December 4 • 6 to 8:00 p.m. • We're excited to announce that Witches' Night Out is back at Crazy Wisdom. Join like-minded individuals to discuss upcoming events, share topics of interest, and answer questions. This is a judgment-free zone, open to everyone! Come to share, listen, learn, and enjoy the gorgeous new space upstairs. FREE. For more information contact Moira at (734) 846-2012 or email mopayne@umich.edu.

Parenting

Clearing the Way for the Power of Listening to Work its Magic for Parents with Leeann Fu • Sunday, November 17 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • It happens so often. Something you say causes a disconnection, and your child checks out. What becomes possible instead if you offer to be a "teddy bear"? Explore how Teddy Bear Talk provides structure for keeping the teddy bear's own concerns or agenda out of the picture and leaves plenty of room for the talker. Suggested donation: $1-10. For more information contact Leeann at (734)237-7676, email teddybear@teddybeartalk.com, or visit teddybeartalk.com.

Personal Growth

Self-Care Masterclass with Christy DeBurton • Self-Paced • In this compact but powerful self-paced course you'll get at the root causes of your self-sabotaging habits. Learn simple and effective tips and tools to set healthy boundaries without the guilt. Banish burn-out, overwhelm and resentment. Get inspired to eat healthy, sleep well, and live better in your body. $19. For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

Relationship First Aid: Chaos to Peace, Journey to Self-Love with Ma'at Seba • Saturday, September 7, 28, October 19, & 26 • 1 to 3:00 p.m. • We will delve into a process of self-discovery of the spirit, mind and body using the spiritual tools of spiritual laws, self-analysis, astrology, numerology, reincarnation, auras, chakras, holistic health, nutrition, and more; seeing how they all contribute to the main purpose of your journey on Earth, and that is to "Know Thyself". $55 per session. For more information contact Ma'at at relationshipfirstaid@yahoo.com or visit relationshipfirstaid.com.

Everything's Working Out Perfectly with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, September 8, 15, 22, 29, October 13, 20, 27, November 10, 17, 24, December 8,15 • 1 to 2:00 p.m. • Have you ever felt so overwhelmed with so many things to do that you become very anxious and don't even know where to begin, devolving into you becoming disorganized, inefficient, and unproductive? Then Everything's Working Out Perfectly is perfectly suited for you! Please come and join us! Class format with Karen—$55 Private with Karen—contact for fee. To study on your own, please purchase manual for $10. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

No Judgment Zone with Llama Nancy Burks • Saturdays, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Discussion and sharing group focused on increasing understanding of how our own habits of judging ourselves and others limit our growth. The facilitator will bring a specific topic to each meeting, then participants can share as much as they wish in a supportive environment. FREE. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

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SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTERS
Receive our Weekly E-newsletter which features information about new books, audio books, tarot, and more!
Get emails when the latest issues of the CW Biweekly magazine and The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal are available.
Name
Email Address
scan QR code
to subscribe: scan the QR code, click here, or visit crazywisdom.net
You will also receive occasional emails, through us, from organizations, centers, and groups that sponsor the kinds of events, classes, and programs that you care about.
We will never sell or share your information!

Photographers Wanted
To take pictures for *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*. Moderate pay, wonderful exposure. It's also fun and interesting to meet the people we take photos of: healers, authors, bodymind therapists, yoga teachers, professors, holistic and spiritual types, and other fringe elements!
For more information, contact Bill Zirinsky at bill@crazywisdom.net

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

Peace

A Consistent Ethic of Life: Navigating Catholic Engagement with US Politics with Steven Millies • Thursday, September 5 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • The consistent ethic of life is a fully Catholic engagement with the difficult challenges that conscience encounters in our time. Surveying the development of the consistent ethic from its beginnings and engaging today's political questions, we will rediscover the consistent ethic now in this challenging, divided moment of our history. Live streamed. $35, registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Inner Peace Retreat with Song of the Morning Community & Staff • Saturday through Sunday, September 13, 14, & 15 AND/OR October 11, 12, & 13 AND/OR December 13, 14, & 15 • Relax into the supportive, collective energy of group meditations, devotional practices, and community meals. Our unique meditative style of hatha yoga is suitable for all levels of experience. Walking trails immerse you in the beauty of nature. Come to unwind, recharge, and reconnect with your inner core of peace. $108, plus lodging. For more information contact Song of the Morning at (989) 983-4107, email office@songofthemorning.org, or visit songofthemorning.org.

Imperfection is beauty, madness is genius, and it's better to be absolutely ridiculous than absolutely boring.

—Marilyn Monroe

Inner Peace Retreat with Naren K. Schreiner • Saturday through Sunday, November 8, 9, & 10 • Relax into the supportive, collective energy of group meditations, devotional practices, and community meals. Our unique meditative style of hatha yoga is suitable for all levels of experience. Walking trails immerse you in the beauty of nature. Come to unwind, recharge, and reconnect with your inner core of peace. $108, plus lodging. For more information contact Song of the Morning at (989) 983-4107, email office@songofthemorning.org, or visit songofthemorning.org.

Reiki

Usui Reiki II Certification Training with Jennifer LaFeldt • Thursday, September 14 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • What will you get for taking Reiki Level 2? You will experience the Holy Love Meditation Experience, learn the Reiki 2 symbols, how to draw them, what their meanings are, and how to use them. The best part of Reiki Level 2 is being able to send distance Reiki to anyone. Learn how to send Reiki peace out to the world. $175. For more information contact Jenny at (734) 478-0866 or email reikitherapy@sbcglobal.net.

First Degree, Usui System of Reiki Healing with Suzy Wienckowski • Saturday, October 5 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. & Sunday, October 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.• Reiki is a gentle, hands-on healing practice that promotes balance and harmony of the Body/Mind/Spirit. Reiki is easily learned by all and after initiation by a Reiki Master, healing energy flows effortlessly through your hands. Class includes the history of Reiki, treatment form for yourself and others, and individual initiations. For more information contact Suzy at (734) 476-7958, or email suzyreiki@aol.com.

Usui/Holy Fire Reiki I and II Certification with Paula A Burke • Sunday, November 3 • 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. • With this course, you will receive guidance on Reiki hand placements and the traditional Japanese Reiki methods introduced by Dr. Mikao Usui. Learning Reiki allows you to be aware of the energies around you and direct that energy to heal yourself and others. Come join the journey of delving into the reiki world and receive the positive benefits. Reiki I is $175, Reiki II is $175; schedule both sessions for $325. For more information contact Paula (517) 936-9064, or email diffusingpeace@yahoo.com.

Second Degree, Usui System of Reiki Healing with Suzy Wienckowski • Saturday, November 9 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. & Sunday, November 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.• Students learn and are empowered to use the three sacred Reiki symbols. The symbols focus and intensify the Reiki energy enabling the practitioner to heal on a deeper level and to send Reiki at a distance. First Degree training is a prerequisite. $500. For more information contact Suzy at (734) 476-7958, or email suzyreiki@aol.com.

Retreats

Personal + Mini Wellness Retreats with Christy DeBurton • Ongoing • When you don't have the time or budget for a full weekend retreat but just need a little 'me-time,' treat yourself to a mini or personal retreat to relax and renew. Visit website for pricing options. For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

Open Mindfulness Meditation Day-Long Retreat with Libby Robinson, Nicole LaBrie, Linda Kessler, Marta Dabis, Barb Branca, Ellen Kaufman, & Jennifer Ratliff-Moss • Saturday, September 7 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • An in-person mindfulness meditation retreat at Triple Crane Retreat Center, Chelsea, with guided meditations, alternating seated and movement. Silent except at beginning and end of retreat. Chairs and cushions available. Includes vegetarian lunch. Registration required. We request donations of $25 to cover the cost of lunch and the center, but they are not required. For more information email openmindfulnessmeditation@gmail.com.

Evolution: A Spiritual Journey with Sharon Zayac • Sunday, September 22 at 6:30 p.m. to Thursday, September 26 at 11:00 a.m. • We are in the midst of a cosmic shift in understanding who we are as persons, as people of faith, as a human species. What is this newly emerging consciousness? What does it teach us about who we are, how we are related to the whole, and how we imagine Holy Mystery? Cost: Commuter: $180; Double: $325; Single: $425 registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Doorways to Inspiration and Well-Being with Bruce and Carol Malnor • Friday through Sunday, October 4, 5, & 6 • Allow yourself to let go and relax into nature's beauty in this weekend retreat aimed to help you regain your own sense of balance and well-being. Throughout the weekend you'll experience fun and easy ways to increase your awareness in nature, and then take that awareness deep within through silent walks, reflection, and meditation. $108, plus lodging. For more information contact Song of the Morning at (989) 983-4107, email office@songofthemorning.org, or visit songofthemorning.org.

Remembering our Awakened Essence: Silent Retreat with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron, & John Orr • Saturday October 14 through Wednesday, October 18 • A mix of vipassana and pure awareness practices and the meditations that support the open heart. Sitting and walking meditation, chanting, instruction for all levels of experience and daily dharma talks. Weather permitting, some meditation and instruction will be held on the lake shore. $610-double room; $680-single room. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Day of Mindfulness with Emily Adama • Saturday, October 19 AND/OR November 16 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Immersed in nature, we will be supported by time-honored practices, the presence of other practitioners, and themed readings exploring key mindfulness teachings. The majority of the day will be in guided silence; however, the day will begin and end with optional sharing and reflection with the group. $45-$110. For more information visit earthwellretreat.com.

Fall Yoga + Self-Care Weekend Retreat with Christy DeBurton • Friday, October 18, Saturday, October 19, & Sunday, October 20 • All-Day • Savor a peaceful weekend of self-care in the countryside of Big Rapids, MI: yoga, nature, farm-to-table meals, lovely company and time to 'unplug' from the outside world. See website for details. For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

ReVillaging for Modern Mothers with Miriam Dowd-Eller & Emily Adama • Saturday, November 9 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. • Through movement, sharing circles, stillness, nature-connection, and song, these retreats will explore some of the qualities, mindsets, and tools you can use in your journey of "ReVillaging," finding or building the support and connections you dream of. $70-$150. For more information visit earthwellretreat.com.

Advent Blessings, Full of Grace with Miriam Brown • Sunday, December 1 at 6:30 p.m. to Thursday, December 5 at 11:00 a.m. • Advent begins with "Hail, you are full of grace." We move to embrace the truth and call that our souls, personally and collectively magnify the Lord. Let us rejoice in this spaciousness and give our "Yes" to the fullness of life with its joys, pain, complexities, spirit, and hope. May we radiate the blessing of divine life within us. Commuter $180; Double $325; Single $425 registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Day of Renewal for Helping Professionals with Ariana Wakeman & Emily Adama • Monday, December 7 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Immersed in nature, you will move through two all-level yoga sessions, guided breath meditation, mindfulness, nature connection practices, and receive a professional massage. Afterwards, enjoy periods of personal and group reflection with others in your field, exploring techniques to prevent burn-out and improve self-care. $160-$280. For more information visit earthwellretreat.com.

Book Review:

SLOW PRODUCTIVITY: THE LOST ART OF ACCOMPLISHMENT WITHOUT BURNOUT

By Christine MacIntyre

In *Slow Productivity*, bestselling author and computer science professor Cal Newport presents a counterintuitive approach to getting things done in our fast-paced world. The book challenges the conventional wisdom of constant hustle and multitasking in our rapid digital age. Known for his previous works, such as *Deep Work* and *Digital Minimalism*, Newport now challenges the traditional understanding of continuous hustle and multitasking. Instead, he advocates for a more deliberate, focused, and less frantic way of working and living.

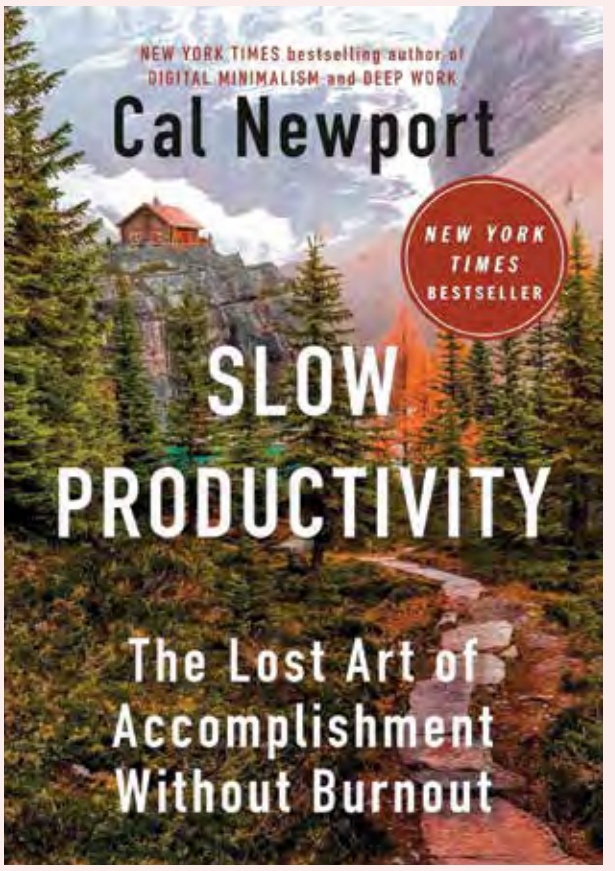
Newport's latest book is divided into two intriguing sections—Foundations and Principles—offering profound insights into the origins of pseudo-productivity and the fundamental principles of productivity and an enlightening exploration of alternative options. Supported by compelling studies and anecdotes, the book paints a vivid picture for readers.

THE CONCEPT OF SLOW PRODUCTIVITY WOVEN THROUGHOUT HISTORY TAKES READERS BACK TO A TIME WHEN WORK WAS IMPACTFUL AND VALUABLE.

The concept of slow productivity prioritizes meaningful, high-quality work over the sheer quantity of tasks completed. It involves selective task engagement, deep work sessions, rhythmic scheduling, minimalism, and reflection. This approach emphasizes quality over quantity, rejects the emphasis on speed, and considers overall well-being and work-life balance, offering a more measured and intentional approach to work and life. Throughout the chapters, readers learn about burnout and how society's notion of productivity's constituents renders the workforce less creative and ambitious.

Newport asserts that accomplishment without burnout is attainable. "I want to prove to you, in other words, that accomplishment without burnout not only is possible but should be the new standard." Furthermore, Newport advocates for a more sustainable approach to combat modern society's ever-increasing culture of busyness. Drawing from time-tested wisdom and practices, he reassures readers that it is possible to maintain productivity at a pace more aligned with human capabilities while still holding individuals accountable for their responsibilities.

The principles of achieving slow productivity are seen throughout history, as Newport demonstrates through his account of English literature extraordinaire Jane Austen and from some of "history's most creative and impactful philosophers, scientists, artists, and writers. The concept of slow productivity woven throughout history takes readers back to a time when work was impactful and valuable. While seemingly crammed with several names, examples, places, and ideas, the content is cohesive and easy to follow.


NEW YORK TIMES bestselling author of
DIGITAL MINIMALISM and DEEP WORK
Cal Newport
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
SLOW PRODUCTIVITY
The Lost Art of Accomplishment Without Burnout

Newport's practical solutions, such as using autopilot when possible, setting aside regular time blocks for recurring tasks, and delegating tasks, are designed to address the needs of the knowledge workforce; however, the content also applies to overwhelmed parents and other individuals who experience burnout making the book highly authentic and relatable.

The specific recommendations incorporating tangible and psychological aspects of slow productivity are fascinating and inspiring. They promote working at a natural pace and offer psychological benefits that can boost productivity and foster greater pride in high-quality achievements–something many people would love to achieve.

The conclusion wraps up information-packed pages and closes the story about McPhee. In the beginning, McPhee's ideals of slow productivity were vague aspirations. By the conclusion, readers can see how they can translate this notion into a concrete, widely adaptable approach to incorporate into their lives.

Newport mentions additional works, such as Anne Helen Petersen's *Can't Even* and Celeste Headlee's *Do Nothing,* that challenge traditional productivity ideas. He has also addressed the growing discontent in his newsletter and podcast as a contributing staff writer for *The New Yorker*. These underscore how popular the topic of hustle culture and burnout are today. His goal for this new book is to help people "free themselves from the dehumanizing grip of pseudo-productivity" and to introduce more intentional thinking about what productivity means and how to make it more feasible and sustainable for everyone.

A refreshing work of cultural criticism, *Slow Productivity* is a roadmap for a slow alternative to the overwhelm that claims many people's lives. Through his deconstruction of absurd notions of productivity, Newport makes waves, captivating readers who work and experience burnout.

Salons

Crazy Wisdom Salon Series—Sages of Ann Arbor • Age-ing to Sage-ing: Harvesting the Wisdom of our Years with Lucinda Kurtz & Oran Hesterman • Thursday, September 12 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • We each have a choice as we grow older: to simply age or become a sage? As Lucinda and Oran introduce the CW Salon series on Sages of Ann Arbor, they will share aspects of eldering essential for contributing our wisdom to healing relationships, our communities and the planet. Come learn how. FREE. For more information, contact Susan at eventsandbookings@crazywisdom.net or Bill at billz@crazywisdom.net

Crazy Wisdom Salon Series—Sages of Ann Arbor • An Evening with Dr. Dennis Chernin, M.D., M.P.H.—in Conversation with Moderator Bill Zirinsky of Crazy Wisdom • Thursday, September 26 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • What's on your mind these days, Dennis Chernin, what's in your heart, what have you relished, what's been really hard, what matters? One of the wise men of integrative medicine in this region, Dr. Chernin (and Dr. Lev Linkner) founded the Parkway Center, the original and pre-eminent clinic for practitioners of complementary, holistic, and integrative medicine in Ann Arbor. He also lectures at U-M Medical School and is the medical director of 3 county health departments. He's taught meditation and breathing techniques for over 40 years, is a certified yoga teacher, and the lead singer, harmonium player and co-founder of Ann Arbor Kirtan. Dr. Chernin is the author of books on meditation and homeopathy, and his most recent book is *A Physician's Journey: Yoga and Meditation to Holistic Medicine*. FREE. For more information, contact Susan at eventsandbookings@crazywisdom.net or Bill at billz@crazywisdom.net.

Crazy Wisdom Salon Series—Sages of Ann Arbor • An Evening with Lisa Gottlieb, MSW, SSW—in Conversation with Moderator Bill Zirinsky of Crazy Wisdom • Thursday, October 10 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • What's on your mind these days, Lisa Gottlieb, what's in your heart, what have you relished, what's been really hard, what matters? One of Ann Arbor's modern-era renaissance women, Lisa has been a leader in the community for decades. The co-founder and Operations Director for Selma Café, she's been at the forefront of Ann Arbor's organic food and farm-to-table culture, and in more recent years, been deeply involved in Nonviolent Communication as a certified trainer and as the Founder and Director of Compassionate Communication of Ann Arbor. She works with individuals, couples, and families through the lens of Nonviolent Communication to improve connection, reduce conflict and make it easier to understand each other. She is currently writing a book called *Musings from a Snarky Empath: Life through the Lens of Nonviolent Communication*. FREE. For more information, contact Susan at eventsandbookings@crazywisdom.net or Bill at billz@crazywisdom.net

Crazy Wisdom Salon Series—Sages of Ann Arbor • Presence, Kindness and Freedom—An Evening with Barbara Brodsky & Davy Rothbart • Wednesday, October 23 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Barbara Brodsky, the founding and guiding teacher of Ann Arbor's Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry, and her son, Davy Rothbart, a bestselling author and Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, explore the topics of Presence, Kindness and Freedom – topics central to both of their work and the name of Brodsky's foundational work. Brodsky is also the medium for the entity Aaron, and the author of many books. Rothbart is a frequent presence on NPR's *This American Life*, creator

of *FOUND* Magazine, and a current Knight-Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan. The evening will include a brief reading from each of them, followed by a spirited discussion. FREE. For more information, contact Susan at eventsandbookings@crazywisdom.net or Bill at billz@crazywisdom.net

Crazy Wisdom Salon Series—Sages of Ann Arbor • An Evening with Dr, Jay Sandweiss in Conversation with Moderator Bill Zirinsky of Crazy Wisdom • Thursday, November 21 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • What's on your mind these days, Jay Sandweiss, what's in your heart, what have you relished, what's been really hard, what matters? Physician and skilled raconteur, Dr. Jay Sandweiss is one of the best-known and most respected integrative physicians in the region. Dr. Sandweiss is board certified by the American Osteopathic Association in neuro-musculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine. He is also board certified in medical acupuncture by the American Board of Medical Acupuncture. Dr. Sandweiss is extensively trained in the fields of Osteopathy, Applied Kinesiology, Functional Medicine and Chinese Medicine. He's been teaching nationally and internationally for decades. FREE. For more information, contact Susan at eventsandbookings@crazywisdom.net or Bill at billz@crazywisdom.net

Art by Sarah Nisbett

Shamanism

Journey Circle with Judy Liu Ramsey • Thursday, September 5 & 19, October 3 & 17, November 7 & 21, December 5 & 19 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • If you know how to do shamanic journeying, please join us to explore the cycles of life through direct revelation by journeying to your spirit guides. Access your inner wisdom and be supported through circle participants. $25 per session or $40 per month. For more information contact Judy at info@judyramsey.net.

Shamanic Journeying for Guidance and Healing with Lauren Jubelirer • Thursday, September 19, October 24, November 21, & December 19 • 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. • Learn how to incorporate Shamanic Journeying into your spiritual practices; a path of direct revelation that will support you in receiving clear guidance, healing, and transmissions from the realms of light. We will raise our frequency to partner with spiritual guides, teachers, master healers, and our higher selves. Suggested donation: $100-$300. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Soul Retrieval with Judy Liu Ramsey • Sunday, September 22 through Thursday, September 26 • 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. • Advanced shamanic class limited to eight persons. Deepen your connection to helping spirits to restore a soul's essence. Learn methods to retrieve souls of body parts, and of places. Initiation and ceremony will anchor your learning. Prerequisites: Journeying, Medicine for the Earth, and Extraction. $650 tuition/$400 for repeating students, room/board all meals included. For more information contact Judy at info@judyramsey.net.

Ancestors: The Power Within with Judy Liu Ramsey • Saturday, October 5 & Sunday, October 6 • 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Ancestors can be powerful allies in your practice, and healing our ancestral lines can help us heal ourselves and our families. Explore your heritage, deepen your connection with the grandmothers and grandfathers in ceremony, in initiation and in the shamanic journey. Prerequisite: basic journeying skills. $180, $90 for repeating students. Located on ZOOM. For more information contact Judy at info@judyramsey.net or visit judyramsey.net.

Creating Safety and Sacred Space with Connie Lee Eiland • Sunday, October 6 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • This class gives you practices and ways of looking at safety and sacred space. It is experiential, including clearing the space before and after. Setting the altar together increases awareness of its aliveness. Journeys and practices are included. The ability to journey is a prerequisite. $100 until September 21, $125 after. For more information contact Connie at (248) 809-3230 or email clshebear7@gmail.com.

A Shamanic View of Death and Dying with Judy Liu Ramsey • Friday through Sunday, November 1, 2, & 3 • 6:00 p.m. Friday through Noon on Sunday • Advanced residential class—limit eight students. A traditional shamanic role was to prepare a person for good death, escort deceased souls to their ancestors, and help the grieving left behind. Learn to help in the dying process, and also experience your own beautiful death. Initiation and ceremony. $275 per person/$150 for repeating students, $300 room/board including all meals. For more information contact Judy at info@judyramsey.net.

Basic Journeying: The Art of Shamanism for Practical and Visionary Purposes in Daily Life with Judy Liu Ramsey • Saturday, November 23 • 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. • The shamanic journey is an easy and powerful tool to access spiritual information. Meet a compassionate spirit or power animal who wants to help you at this time in your life. Develop a self-directed practice of empowerment, allowing you to move safely, intentionally through the world in a balanced way. Taught via ZOOM. $160 per person/$80 for repeating students. For more information contact Judy at info@judyramsey.net.

Spiritual Development

Life's Spiritual Wake-up Calls by ECKANKAR • Sunday, September 8 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • In every moment, you are in the grasp of divine love. Divine Spirit picks the vehicle: a song, dreams, people you meet, a remembered conversation. Explore how these wake-up calls can illuminate your path to fulfillment at this ECK Light and Sound Service; a blend of insightful stories, creative arts and contemplative exercises presented by students of ECKANKAR, The Path of Spiritual Freedom. Experience the sacred sound of HU, which can open your heart to divine love. Located at the Pittsfield Branch Library, 2359 Valley Drive. For more information visit eckmi.org.

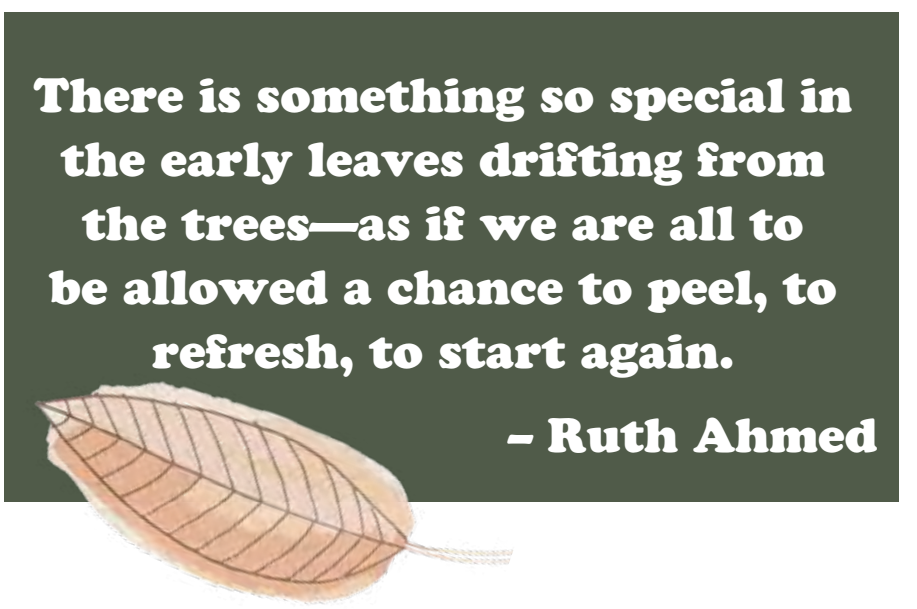
Sufi Gathering with Imam Kamau Ayubbi • Tuesdays from September 3 to December 31 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • An evening of discussion and Sufi chanting on Zoom. $5-10 suggested donation. For more information, visit interfaithspirit.org.

Connecting with & Cultivating your Relationship with G-D (from a Kabbalistic Perspective) with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, September 8,15, 22, 29, October 13, 20, 27, November10, 17, 24, December 8, 15 • 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. • Create a sacred space, heighten your vibration, compose questions, ask G-D and decipher whether the answers come from your spirit vs. thoughts, emotions, or body sensations. Find divinity in self and others; trust, surrender, serve; express gratitude and awe; be comforted, healed, protected, and guided by G-D for your soul's purpose, dreams, and challenges. $100 per session ($1,000 for all 10 sessions). 50% discount if you pay for all 10 sessions prior to first. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

Through the Other End of the Telescope with G Arthur Weidman • Saturday, September 14, October 12, November 9 • 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. • We will explore how beliefs, attitudes, and expectations shape our lives—both in a positive and negative way based on the quality of one's emotional tone. Donations of $5-10 requested. For more information contact G Arthur at gweidman97@gmail.com.

That Which is Already Awake is the Path: Awakening to the Joy & Unconditional Love Within with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron & John Orr • Tuesday, September 24, October 8, 22, November 5, 19, December 3, 17 • 6:45 to 9:00 p.m. • The class period will be a mixture of meditation instruction and exploring together: what is this true self we find when we release identification to the outer forms of body, emotions, and thoughts? Suggested donation: $140-$420. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

What Happened at the Synod on Synodality — And What is Next? With Massimo Faggioli • Thursday, November 14 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • The talk will summarize the unfolding of the Synodal Process (2021-2024) culminating with the two assemblies of the Synod (October 2023 and 2024). The focus will be on the ecclesial meaning of this event and on the potential for the development of doctrine and discipline for the most debated issues in the Catholic Church and the after-Synod period. $35, registration required. For more information, contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@


There is something so special in the early leaves drifting from the trees—as if we are all to be allowed a chance to peel, to refresh, to start again.
– Ruth Ahmed

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

How to Live a Soul-directed Life with ECKANKAR • Sunday, December 8 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Discover more about yourself as soul, an eternal, creative, spiritual being. Connect with this most sacred part of yourself, receive new insights, and magnify love in your life. All are welcome to this ECK Light and Sound Service which offers you the chance to explore your own direct connection with the Divine. Students of ECKANKAR, The Path of Spiritual Freedom, will share spiritual insights for living authentically and harmoniously. Experience the sacred sound of HU. Located at the Pittsfield Branch Library, 2359 Valley Drive. FREE. For more information, visit eckmi.org.

Stress Management

Re-Energize Your Life Retreat with Will and Wendy Page-Echols • Tuesday through Thursday, September 20, 21, & 22 • The Re-Energize Your Life Retreat offers respite for those who need a reset or those experiencing burnout in their professional lives. The curated schedule includes meditation, yoga, and workshops on healthy ways to relieve stress with tools to take with you, providing a restful weekend so you can return to your life anew. $108, plus lodging. For more information contact Song of the Morning at (989) 983-4107, email office@songofthemorning.org, or visit songofthemorning.org.

Role-Plays for Difficult Conversations with Leeann Fu • Sunday, September 29 & November 17 • 1 to 2:00 p.m. • Are difficult conversations stressful for you? Role-playing with a neutral party can help by making things feel less charged, lowering the stakes, and providing opportunities to practice different ways to handle the conversation. This online session allows you record a role-play of your difficult conversation—if you would like. FREE. For more information contact Leeann at (734) 237-7676, email teddybear@teddybeartalk.com, or visit teddybeartalk.com.

Clearing the Way for the Power of Listening to Work its Magic with Leeann Fu • Sunday, October 20 • 4 to 5:00 p.m. • Do you think better when thinking out loud? Can making use of this power more often help you manage stress? Come to this online workshop to learn about how Teddy Bear Talk can help you get help form listeners that give you plenty of room to take things wherever you need to go with them. Suggested donation: $1-10. For more information contact Leeann at (734) 237-7676, email teddybear@teddybeartalk.com, or visit teddybeartalk.com.

Sustainable Living Skills

Learning Tour at Strawbale Studio with Deanne Bednar • Sunday, September 22 • 10:00 a.m. to Noon • Tour the natural buildings and grounds at Strawbale Studio! See the enchanting, thatched roofs, strawbale structures, sculpted earthen walls, Rocket Stove, Earth Oven & more. $20. For more information visit strawbalestudio.org.

Tai Chi, Martial Arts, Fitness, and Self Defense

Wu Style Tai Chi Chaun with Marylin Feingold • Sundays, September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, October 6, 13, 20, 27, November 3, December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 • 4 to 5:00 p.m. • Learn the ancient art of meditation in motion with this "soft style" martial art emphasizing relaxation and balance. Drop-in, $5 per session collected at the door. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-338, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Tai Chi Beginner's Class with Master Wasentha Young • Monday, September 9 through December 9 from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. AND/OR Thursday, September 12 through December 12 from 6 to 7:15 p.m. • T'ai Chi, often characterized as mindful meditation, is a series of postures linked together in a continuous flow. It integrates the mind and body, promotes relaxation, as well increases balance and concentration. You can attend both sessions at no extra cost! $215. For more information contact Peaceful Dragon School at (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

Chen Style Tai Chi Chuan with Joe Walters • Ongoing Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays • Times Vary, 1 Hour Maximum • Learn basic training and forms of Chen Style Tai Chi Chuan. FREE. For more information contact Joe at annarbortaichi@gmail.com or visit annarbortaichi.com.

Erin Cantrell Fitness—Total Body Conditioning • Daily classes available • Varying times available • Private training sessions as well as group classes in yoga and fitness. Offering classes in VinYin, Total Body Conditioning, Sweat, Shred, Hi Energy Shred, Low Impact Sculpt, Power Sled, Not your Mom's Pilates, and more. Check out the schedule and learn more at erincantrellfitness.com.

Martial Arts and Fitness at Final Round Training Center • Daily classes available • Varying times available • Classes includes Muay Thai, Grappling, Jiu-Jitsu, Cardio Kickboxing, classes for women and classes for kids. Learn more online at finalroundtrainingcenter.com or call (734) 929-4362.

Tarot and Divination

Empathetic Tarot Readings with Leif Laufeyjarsen • See Schedule Below • Hosted at Crazy Wisdom. Walk-ins welcome. September 14th through December 31st. First, second, and third Saturdays, from 1 to 5:00 p.m. Second and third Fridays 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. $3/minute, 15 minute minimum. For more information contact Leif at laufeyjarsen9@gmail.com.

Intuitive Readings with Marcella Fox • See Schedule Below • Hosted at Crazy Wisdom. Last Saturday and Sunday of each month, September through December. Noon to 3:00 p.m. Rates: $20 first 15 min. Additional time $1 per minute. For more information contact Susan at eventsandbookings@crazywisdom.net.

Theater

Two One-Act Plays by A.M. Dean with Neighborhood Theatre Group • Friday through Sunday, September 13, 14, & 15 • Friday & Saturday 8:00 p.m., Sunday 2:00 p.m. • *The Former Things* tells the story of a couple, in the whole of the rapture, who reunite and find out even during the Apocalypse, they're still crazy after all these years. In *Carl, Baby*, Carl, a teen staying up north for the summer in the 1990s, meets a local girl who can't seem to follow through. Cost TBD. For more information contact info@ntgypsi.org or visit ntgypsi.org.

Writing and Poetry

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series with Edward Morin, David Jibson & Lissa Perrin • Workshops held Wednesday, September 11, October 9, November 13, December 11 • Readings held Wednesday, September 25, October 23, December 4 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Workshop offer space for writers to discuss their work. Featured readers perform for 1-hour, open mic follows. Featured readers: Up-State New Yorkers Judith Kerman and Helen Ruggieri (9/25); Crazy Wisdom Workshop writers Kathlene Barrett, Nicole Birkett, Shutta Crum, David Jibson, Markland Lloyd, Edward Morin, Lissa Perrin (10/23); poet/novelist Sandra Cisneros (12/4). Held virtually on ZOOM. FREE. For more information email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com, or visit cwcircle.poetry.blog.

All-in Colors, Creative Writing—Hybrid Style with Tarianne DeYonker • Saturday, September 14 • 1 to 4:00 p.m. • As varieties of colors dress the trees, you're invited to explore the stories or poems words can create. This workshop provides time for writing and reading our work aloud to receive feedback on its strengths and impact. Beginning and experienced writers are welcome to join in person or online. $35, registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Re-Membering with Tarianne DeYonker • Saturday, November 30 • 1 to 4:00 p.m. • It's one thing to share memories and quite another to probe them for the meaning they have for our lives. This writing workshop is designed to tap into that inner wisdom carried by our memories and meant to deepen our appreciation and understanding of our lives. Beginning and experienced writers are welcome to join in person or online. $35, registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Yoga

Yoga Your Way with Christy DeBurton • Ongoing• Aqua yoga, Hatha, Vinyasa + Yin Yoga, private sessions, hybrid online courses, retreats and more. Visit website for pricing options. For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

The Practice with Michele Bond • Ongoing Wednesdays • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Great for athletes or anyone looking for a strong practice. Enjoy increasing core strength, enhancing flexibility, agility, balance, and mental focus with this fun and energetic practice. Students gain so much mind/ body/ spirit wisdom that they return year after year to enjoy this life enhancing practice. $15 if registered for the semester, $20 drop in with instructor's permission. For more information contact Michele at (734) 358-8546, email michele@yogahouseannarbor.com, or visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

Yoga Essentials with Michele Bond • Ongoing Thursdays • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • For those new to yoga, or new to this system. Learn Universal Principles of Alignment that are an invaluable aid to learning the postures, deepening your understanding of the body, and developing a yoga practice that is safe, joyful, therapeutic, and fun! $15 if registered for the semester, $20 drop in with instructor's permission. For more information contact Michele at (734) 358-8546, email michele@yogahouseannarbor.com, or visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

Hatha Yoga with Samantha Lieberman • September 5 12, 19, 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, November 7, December 5, 12, & 19 • 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. • Sam loves the process of creating and offering safe yet challenging yoga sequencing. She enjoys sharing her love of yoga with all levels of students and is deeply honored to pass the gift of yoga to others. Drop-in $15 per session – First visit is free! Cash or more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Yoga at Tiny Buddha Yoga, voted best in Washtenaw County for Seven Years • Daily classes available • Varying times available • Classes include Hot Vinyasa, Blend Vinyasa, Slow Burn, Ashtanga, Yin Restorative, Slow Flow, and Yinyasa. Teacher Training and individual instruction available. Two Ann Arbor locations. Check out our Mysore and U-M student ambassador programs out online at tinybuddhayoga.com or call (734) 926-5040.

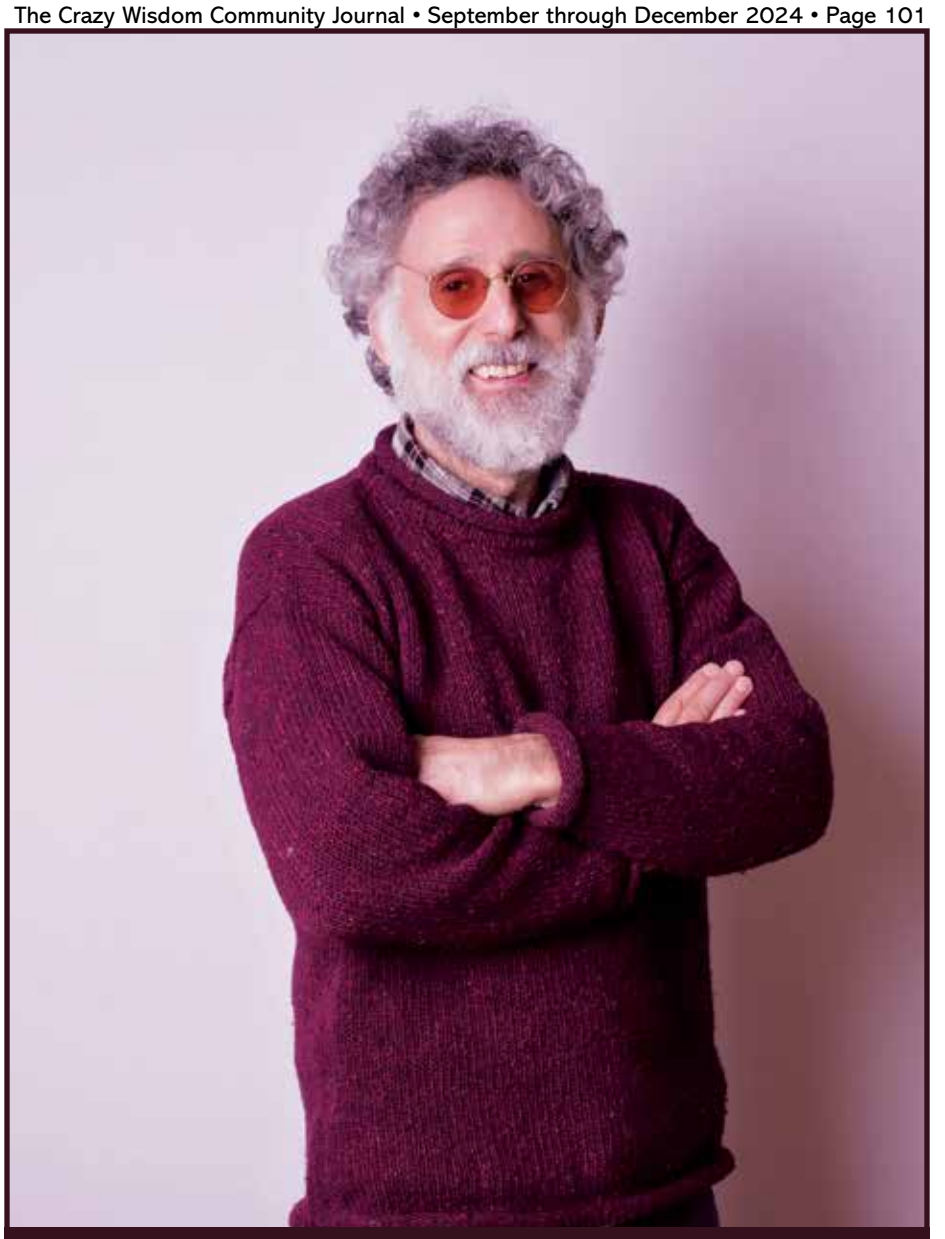
Yoga Classes at Red Yoga, A Hot Yoga Studio • Daily classes available • Varying times available • Classes include Hot Vinyasa, Steel Mace Flow, Yin Yoga, Yin and Yoga Nidra, Community Karma Yoga and more. Teacher training and Private classes available. For more information visit redyogaannarbor.com or call (734) 436-8119.

Yoga at Imagine Fitness and Yoga • Daily classes available • Varying times available • Offering classes in Fundamentals and Beginner Yoga, Vinyasa Levels 1-3, Restorative Yin Yoga, Ashtanga, and Hatha. Heated floors in the yoga studio. We will help you develop the strength, flexibility and balance that are essential for a healthy lifestyle. For more information visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com, call (734) 622-811, or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

Yoga at Yogacentric Studio, an inclusive, casual studio • Varying days and times available • Offering classes in Yin/Restorative, Unwind/Gentle, Basic/ Blend, YinYasa, Slow Flow, Flow and Glow, Yoga Sculpt, Lunchtime Yoga, and Vinyasa. Also offering yoga & sound bath workshops and Reiki. For more information visit yogacentric.net.

IT IS ONLY WHEN WE TAKE CHANCES, WHEN OUR LIVES IMPROVE. THE INITIA,L AND THE MOST DIFFICULT, RISK THAT WE NEED TO TAKE IS TO BECOME HONEST.

—WALTER ANDERSON



One of the wise men of integrative medicine in this region, Dr. Dennis Chernin (and Dr. Lev Linkner) founded the Parkway Center, the original and pre-eminent clinic for practitioners of complementary, holistic, and integrative medicine in Ann Arbor. Chernin also lectures at U-M Medical School and is the medical director of three county health departments. He's taught meditation and breathing techniques for over 40 years, and he's a certified yoga teacher. And he's the lead singer, harmonium player, and co-founder of Ann Arbor Kirtan. Dr. Chernin is the author of books on meditation and homeopathy, and his most recent book is *A Physician's Journey: Yoga and Meditation to Holistic Medicine*.

Join Dr. Dennis Chernin, M.D., M.P.H and moderator Bill Zirinsky in the Celestial Lounge on Thursday, September 26 from 7 to 9:00 p.m. See the calendar listing under the heading Salons page 98 on page 91 under Energy and Healing for more information.

If you are interested in obtaining some biographical information about the teachers, lecturers, and workshop leaders whose classes, talks, and events are listed in this Calendar, please look in the section that follows the Calendar, which is called "Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders, and The Centers" and which starts on page 102.

Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders & the Centers

Emily Adama, MSW, has been teaching mindfulness and meditation in various therapeutic and community settings since 2013. She has her master's in social work in Interpersonal Practice and Mental Health from the University of Michigan and has been a dedicated meditation practitioner since 2010.

Imam Kamau Ayubbi received his religious and spiritual education and training via the Islamic Supreme Council of America (ISCA) and was appointed as an Imam in 2002.

Paul Barr has been a Certified Yoga Teacher for over 10 years, as well as a Certified Personal Trainer and Nutritionist.

Rev. David Bell is a 1998 graduate of the New Seminary with an M.A. in Spiritual Counseling. During that same year, he founded ICSG and retired in June 2017.

Deanne Bednar Has a background in art & sustainable futures education and has illustrated three books. She has been practicing and instructing natural building and sustainable skills since 1996.

Nicholas Bhandari is a skilled ceramics instructor with years of knowledge, teaching all age groups for nearly two years.

Bloodroot Herb Shop is a retail herb store and community space offering bulk herbs, teas, herbal products, plants, zines, health consultations, classes, events, mutual aid offerings and more.

Carol Blotter's meditation practice draws from dual roots in the Quaker and Buddhist traditions. She has been teaching insight meditation since 1999.

Michele Bond has devoted a lifetime to fitness and wellness, including yoga, therapeutics, meditation dance, martial arts, swimming, gymnastics, stunts, and swordplay; teaching for over 20 years.

Barbara Brodsky, founder and guiding teacher of Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry has taught Vipassana meditation and non-dual awareness from the Dzogchen traditions since 1960.

Miriam Brown, **OP's** years of reflection and ministry as a Sinsinawa Dominican have enriched her sense of "God Alive" in each person, and in each unique "geography of faith"

Jaren Bryson is a ceramics instructor at Throw and is currently completing a BFA in Ceramics at Wayne State University.

Dr. Kapila Castoldi is a physics professor. She has studied meditation under the guidance of spiritual teacher Sri Chinmoy for nearly 40 years.

Dr. Dennis Chernin, M.D., M.P.H. currently practices holistic medicine in Ann Arbor using nutrition, yoga, meditation therapies, and homeopathy. He is also the medical director of three county health departments and lectures at the University of Michigan Medical School.

Khenpo Chophel has a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies following traditional monk's training in India. In his teachings, he applies the ancient wisdom of Buddhism to the problems facing the modern world.

Christy DeBurton, RYT, is a yoga and healthy lifestyle coach. For 26 years she has helped people feel better in their bodies through yoga, meditation, retreats, HSP, Midlife Empowerment self-care, and perimenopause guidance.

Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry is a non-profit 501(c)3 guided by wisdom teachings from multiple traditions.

Tarianne DeYonker, OP, MSW, is a Certified Amherst Writers and Artists Facilitator.

Miriam Dowd-Eller is a facilitator, movement/yoga Instructor, and a Licensed Massage Therapist.

EarthWell Retreat Center is located on 40 acres near the towns of Chelsea, Grass Lake, and Manchester.

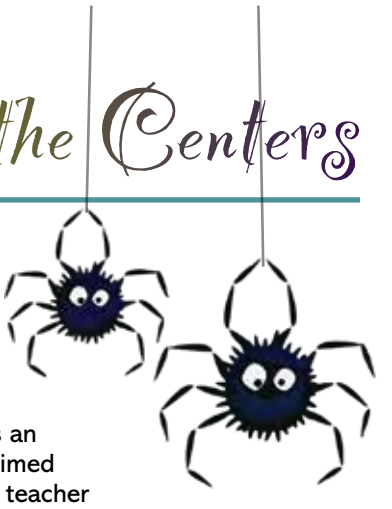
Connie Lee Eiland is a shamanic practitioner and teacher with 20 yrs. of experience. She has studied with Sandra Ingerman, Betsy Bergstrom, Herb Stevenson, Ana Larramendi, and others.

Enlightened Soul Center & Shop The mission of ECV is to spread the light to southeast Michigan.

Massimo Faggioli is professor of historical theology at Villanova University. He is member of the steering committee for the project "Vatican II: Event and Mandate" a commentary of Vatican II.

Marilyn Feingold began training in Tai Chi Chuan in 1996 and began training Tai Chi Chuan as a way to help control pain and maintain good joint and muscle mobility.

Lori Fithian has been leading drumming circles since 1998, and welcomes all kinds of musical expressions, improvisations, voices, and instruments in her circles.



John Friedlander is an internationally acclaimed psychic, author, and teacher with degrees from Duke University and Harvard Law School.

Leeann Fu, PhD, has engaged in the practice of Authentic Movement and Nonviolent Communication for many years, teaches graduate courses at the U of M, and co-facilitates parenting circles.

Norma Gentile trained as a professional singer with 35 years of experience and has trained in many esoteric traditions.

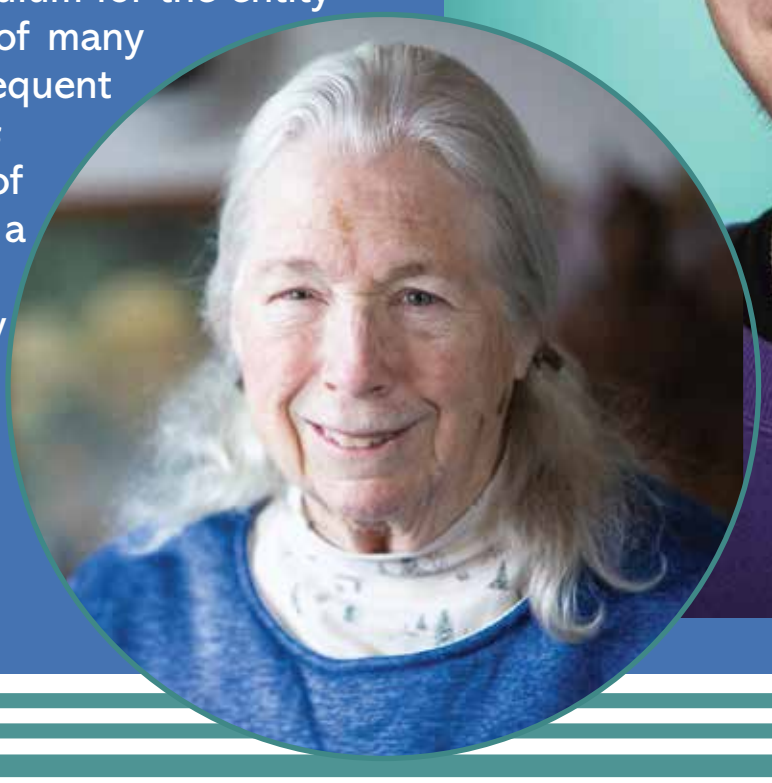
Robin Lily Goldberg MFA, RYT, is an Ecological Artist, Organic Intelligence® Coach, and Healing-Centered Educator. She offers integrative co-learning opportunities to support personal

Amy Hertz is a longtime student of Gelek Rimpoche and has edited and published best-selling Buddhist books.

Art by Sarah Nisbett

Barbara Brodsky, the founding and guiding teacher of Ann Arbor's Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry, and her son, **Davy Rothbart**, a bestselling author and Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, will explore the topics of Presence, Kindness, and Freedom—topics central to both of their work, and also the name of Brodsky's foundational work— on Wednesday October 23 from 7 to 9:00 p.m.

Brodsky is also the medium for the entity Aaron, and the author of many books. Rothbart is a frequent presence on NPR's *This American Life*, creator of *FOUND* Magazine, and a current Knight-Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan.



For more information, see the calendar listing under the heading "Salons" on page 98.

Oran Hesterman, Ph.D. is Founder of Fair Food Network, ceramic artist, and a certified Sage-ing® Mentors; helping people discover their life's wisdom and explore their soul's journey.

Lauren Hoffman is the owner of Whole-Self Wellness specializing in Acupuncture Detoxification, RYT-200, FIT4MOM, AFAA, and Usui Ryoho Reiki.

Infinite Light Center located in Jackson, Michigan, is a spiritual center and sound sanctuary providing events, classes, services, and sound therapy instruments.

The Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth is a diverse community exploring all spiritual paths.

Robert Jacobs lived and studied with two spiritual masters from the Indian yoga tradition in ashrams for over 18 years. He is an author and leads Awakened Heart Yoga & Meditation in Gainesville, Florida.

Roger Jackson is professor emeritus of Asian studies transformation and environmental revitalization.

Lisa Gottlieb, MSW, SSW is the Founding Director of Compassionate Communication of Ann Arbor and is a Nonviolent Communication Certified Trainer. She works with individuals, couples and families through the lens of nonviolent communication to improve connection, reduce conflict and make it easier to understand each other.

Karen Greenberg is a Success-Tracking Train-the-Trainer, Essence Repatterning and D.O.V.E. Practitioner, dance instructor, physical therapist, worldwide spiritual growth teacher, and author.

Paulette Grotrian is a certified Mindful Self-Compassion teacher with a 30-year meditation practice. She is a founding member of Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness and Open Mindfulness Meditation.

Simon Ha gives a solo exhibition of about twenty of his abstract acrylic paintings, freshly returned from a successful opening of the 9th Annual Benefit Exhibition of Bridgette Mayer Gallery in Philadelphia.

Becca Hacket began her journey into the healing arts after having a spinal fusion and feeling as though something was missing with her overall care. She is a Yoga Therapy graduate, a Reiki Master, Crystal Healer, and Meditation Guide.

Hanna Hasselschwert is a Death Doula at Acacia End of Life Services; working with the dying and their families to make this life transition as easy as possible.

Amy Hertz is a longtime student of Gelek Rimpoche and has edited and published best-selling Buddhist books.

Oran Hesterman, Ph.D. is Founder of Fair Food Network, ceramic artist, and a certified Sage-ing® Mentors; helping people discover their life's wisdom and explore their soul's journey.

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Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders & the Centers

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Robert Jacobs lived and studied with two spiritual masters from the Indian yoga tradition in ashrams for over 18 years. He is an author and leads Awakened Heart Yoga & Meditation in Gainesville, Florida.

Roger Jackson is professor emeritus of Asian studies and religion at Carleton College and visiting professor of Buddhism at Maitripa College. His work covers Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, meditation, ritual, and poetry.

Jewel Heart is dedicated to bringing the practice of Tibetan Buddhism to everyone.

Jewel Heart Instructors lead participants in meditation and are available to answer participants' questions before and after the meditation.

David Jibson is a poet, editor, blogmaster, and former social worker.

Lauren Jubelirer has studied with several indigenous shamans, healers, and medicine people. She is a professional life and embodiment coach, Acupuncturist, and shamanic astrologer.

Karuna Buddhist Center is an independent nonprofit with a strong background in Tibetan Buddhism and a nonsectarian emphasis.

Michael Kaufman-Schofield's journey into basket weaving was driven by a deep love for a family member planning their eventual green burial and her affection for growing and tending plants.

Sister Esther Kennedy, OP, is a Dominican Sister of Adrian, Michigan, retreat leader, and spiritual director.

Rev. Annie Kopko is a long-time member and frequent speaker at the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth.

Lucinda Kurtz, M.A. is a Brennan Healing Science Practitioner, ritualist, writer, and poet.

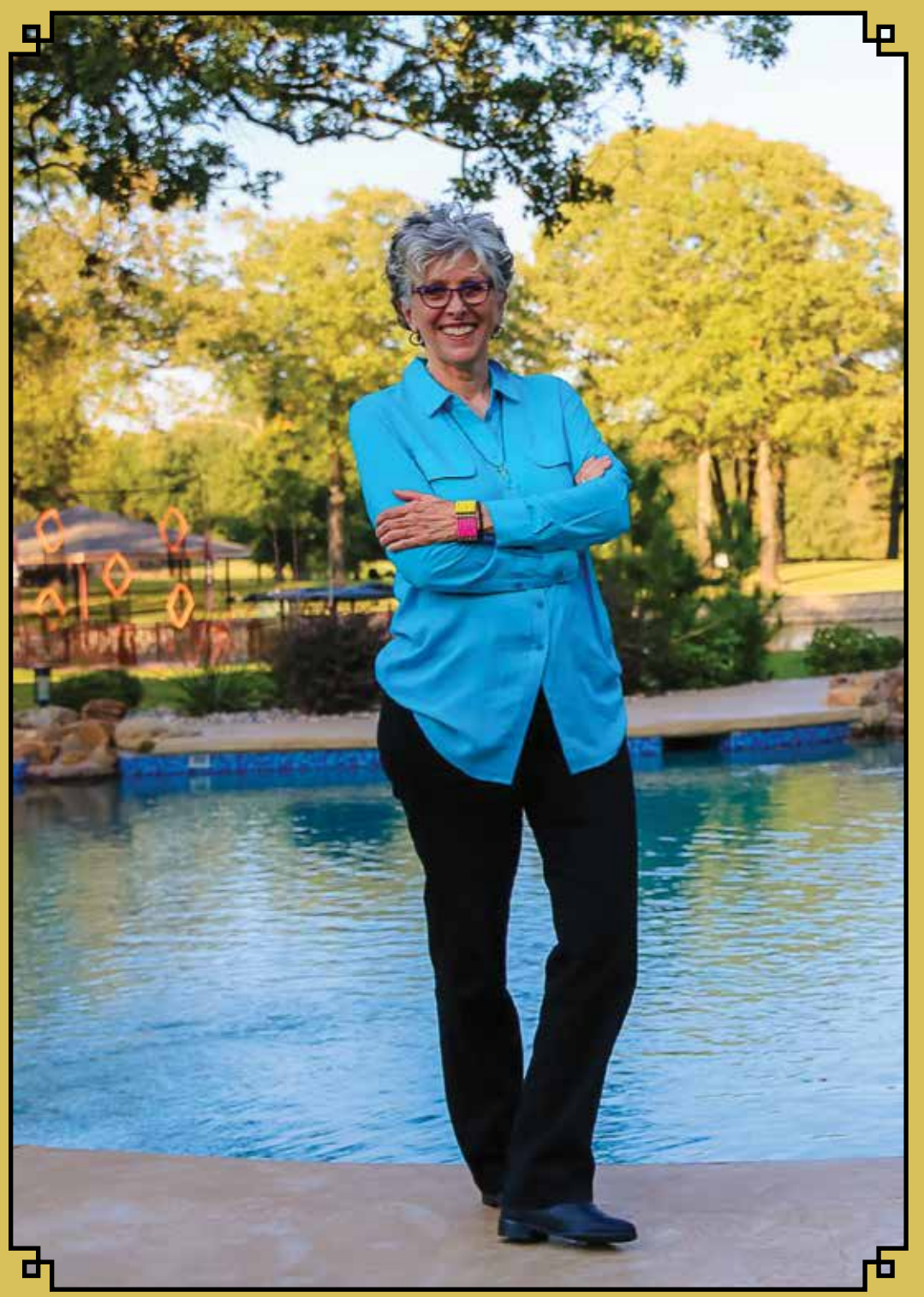
Jennifer LaFeldt, LMT, RMT she began her training in the Usui System of Reiki in 2001 and became a Reiki Master, third degree, in a little over a year.

Sam Lieberman has been practicing yoga since 1988. She received teacher trainings in Yoga Fit and Yoga Medics, a medical model approach with emphasis on alignment and therapeutic needs.

Mary Light, Founder of the Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal, and Natural Medicine, has been an herbalist, LMT, creator of energy medicine instruction, and traditional naturopath for 20+ years.

Figen Lacin has studied Buddhism since 2010 when she met Gelek Rimpoche. She works as an engineer and appreciates connecting with people.

Brenda Lindsay is a MBSR Teacher trained through Brown University, a Certified Mindfulness Instructor, Neuroscience Coach, Personal Resilience



Nikki Nanos is a Mindfulness & Meditation Teacher/Trainer, coach, and speaker with over 750 hours of mindfulness studies. Her certified Mindfulness Teacher/Training comes from both The School of Positive Transformation and The Dallas Yoga Studio. Nanos's credentials as a Mindfulness Coach are from the Mindful Attentionist Coaching Program (MAC) with her mentor and teacher Mitra Manesh. She has certification in Integrative Coaching from The School of Positive Transformation and Somatic Mindful Coaching from Mindful Coach Method. Nanos lives in Waterford, MI. Learn more about Nanos at nikkinanos.com.

Don't miss her essay, You Are Not Broken, on page 90.

Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders & the Centers

Practitioner, and board member of the Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness.

Bruce and Carol Malnor have led nature awareness workshops and retreats for over 40 years in the U.S.A and abroad.

Debra Metler MSW, CHC, is a social worker and a recently certified health coach leading imaginary friend workshops and laughter yoga.

Rob Meyer-Kukan is a licensed massage therapist, and sound healer. Owner of 7 Notes Natural Health, Rob works with people who suffer from chronic pain, need to relax, and who are looking for natural health alternatives.

Steven P. Millies studied political theory at the Catholic university of America and is a Professor of Public Theology and director of The Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Jackie Miller is a Certified Professional Breathwork Practitioner; trained with Transformative Education International in Sydney, Australia, in 2009; certified by the Global Professional Breathwork Alliance.

The Mix Studios is a place for all types of movement and health related classes and events.

Edward Morin is a writer, translator, and former university teacher.

Neighborhood Theatre Group's mission is to make theatre an accessible home for the collaboration of people, artistic challenges, and new ideas.

Ben Negron is a local leader and activist.

Open Mindfulness Meditation offers free weekly drop-in sessions & retreats.

Open Mindfulness Meditation Leaders are all experienced meditators and teachers of mindfulness meditation.

John Orr has taught meditation since 1980. He is the Guiding Teacher of New Hope Sangha, North Carolina, a retired faculty member of Duke University, and Theravada Buddhist monk.

Drs. Will and Wendy Page-Echols are retired Osteopathic Physicians. As Clear Light Community members, they apply practical spiritual living principles along with Mind-Body, Environmental, and Nutritional Medicine.

The Peaceful Dragon School has provided the self-care practices of Tai Chi and Qigong since 1990.

Barbara Pott is an experienced and insightful clairvoyant.

Judy Liu Ramsey is a shamanic practitioner for humans, animal chaplain, shamanic trainer and communicator with over 20 years of experience.

Raymond James & Associates give back to their communities in countless ways, supporting the arts, as well as a host of educational, civic, social, and philanthropic endeavors.

Demo Rinpoche is Jewel Heart's Resident Spiritual Advisor. He studied at Drepung Loseling Monastery in India under the supervision of the Dalai Lama and holds the highest monastic degree of Geshe Lharampa.

Gelek Rimpoche was the Founder and Spiritual Director of Jewel Heart. Tutored by the great masters in Old Tibet, he was able to convey the Tibetan Buddhist tradition with wisdom, kindness, and wit.

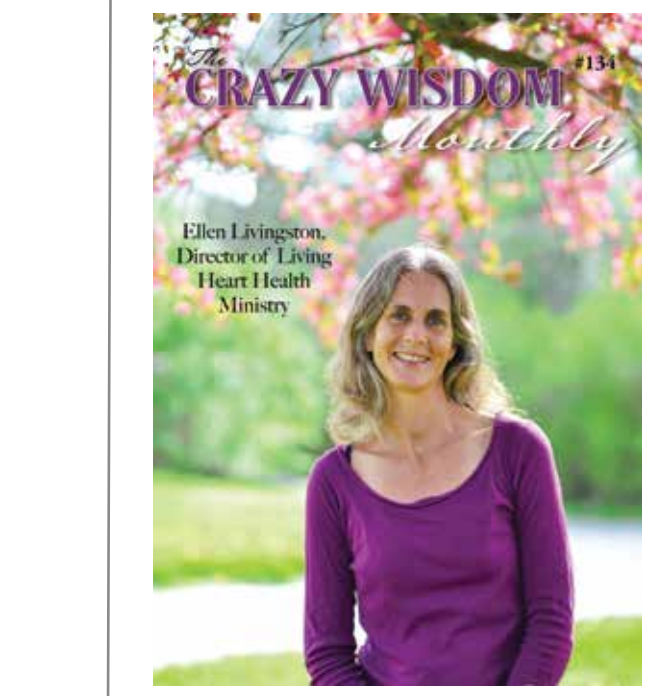
Libby Robinson, Ph.D., MSW, Certified Teacher of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, has taught over 50 MBSR classes and personally practiced mindfulness for 45 years.

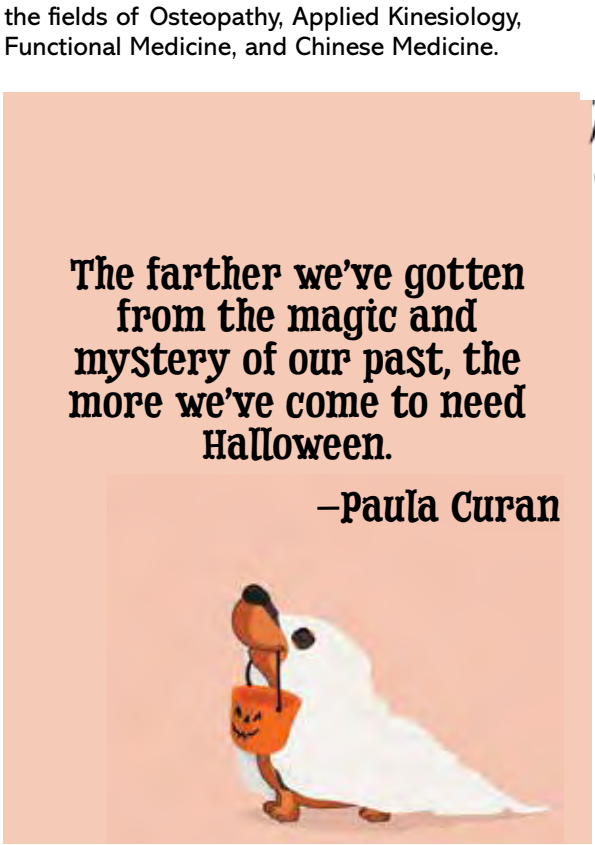
Davy Rothbart is a bestselling author, Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, frequent presence on *This American Life* on NPR, and creator of *FOUND* Magazine. His film *17 Blocks* was one of three Oscar nominees for best documentary a few years back. He is the author of a number of books, including *My Heart is an Idiot*, and *The Lone Surfer of Montana, Kansas*.

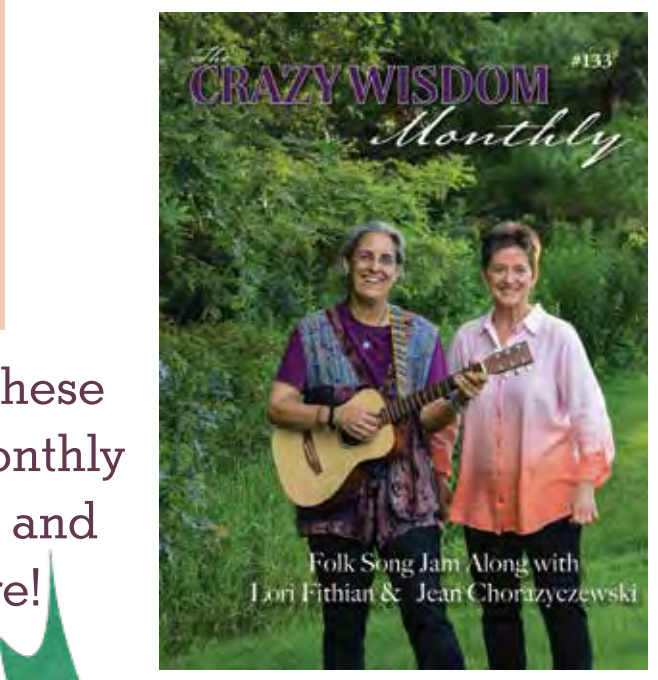
Dr. Michaelene Ruhl is an expert with a doctorate in Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology from the Michigan School of Psychology and has over 15 years of experience.

Hartmut Sagolla has been studying Tibetan Buddhism for over 30 years. Since 2002, he has served as a Program Director at Jewel Heart.

Dr. Jay Sandweiss, D.O., is board certified by the American Osteopathic Association in neuro-musculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine. He is also board certified in medical acupuncture by the American Board of Medical Acupuncture; extensively trained in the fields of Osteopathy, Applied Kinesiology, Functional Medicine, and Chinese Medicine.







Naren K. Schreiner began his spiritual life as a fellowship monk in the ashram Paramahansa Yogananda for 14 years. He later founded Sangita Yoga, offering sacred music and ritual to centers throughout US and Mexico.

Susan Slack has been leading the Dances of Universal Peace for decades. She is a professional musician, author, and has been designated a senior mentor within the Dance network.

Colette Simone has served as a psychologist, educator, and musician. She serves as channel for Yeshua, Mary Magdalene, Anna, grandmother of Yeshua, and I AM that I AM.

Song of the Morning has welcomed spiritual seekers to enjoy spiritual renewal since 1970.

Read these CW Monthly Issues and more!

Marcella Fox has over 20 years of experience doing intuitive readings. She has a Master's in Social Work in Mental Health for Adults from the University of Michigan. She has also studied Shamanism in Peru, Canada, and the United States, and holds a 200 hour Yoga teacher training. Fox will be offering intuitive readings at Crazy Wisdom this fall on the last weekend of each month from noon to 3:00 p.m.

For more information, see the calendar listing under the heading "Tarot and Divination" on page 100.

Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders & the Centers

Still Mountain Buddhist Center is a community of people practicing meditation and Theravada-based Buddhist teachings, based in Ann Arbor.

Maureen Taylor-Professor is a social worker, dedicated community activist, and professor at Marygrove College, Detroit.

Throw is a ceramic studio offering classes and event space on the Homes Campus.

Jeremy Tracey is the Founder of Throw Art Studio and a self-taught Ceramicist.

Ari Wakeman, LMSW, received a MSW from the University of Michigan and has worked in a variety settings. Ari is also a certified 200-hour yoga instructor, with specializations in Yoga for 12-Step Recovery and perinatal yoga.

Rory Walsh is a certified Qigong instructor trained by Master Wasentha Young of the Peaceful Dragon School.

Matt Watroba is the voice of folk music on WDET through programs such as "Folks Like Us" and the nationally syndicated Folk Alley and Sing Out! Radio Magazine.

Joe Walters is a 30-year practitioner of Chen Style Tai Chi Chuan.

G Arthur Weidman has a BS in Religion and Philosophy from Western Michigan University.

Eve Wilson, UCM Reverend and master healer, offers cutting edge leadership for world healing and ascension. Award-winning author and blogger with 36 years training and certifying healer practitioners.

Wasentha Young is a master of Tai Chi and Qigong since 1968. She has also received formal instruction in Buddhist and Taoist meditation styles; holds certificates in Acupressure, Five Element Practice, and has a master's degree in Transpersonal Studies.

Celeste Zygmont has taken part in teacher training programs Venture Fourth and Dharma Path; serving on the DSC Board of Directors. She has been involved with Deep Spring Center for nearly three decades.

If you are a holistic/spiritual/psychological growth practitioner in the area, but don't regularly lead classes or workshops, you can still be listed for free in our online Holistic Resource Guide. List your practice and add your logo, photo, and even a short video. To claim your listing, please visit AnnArborHolistic.com.

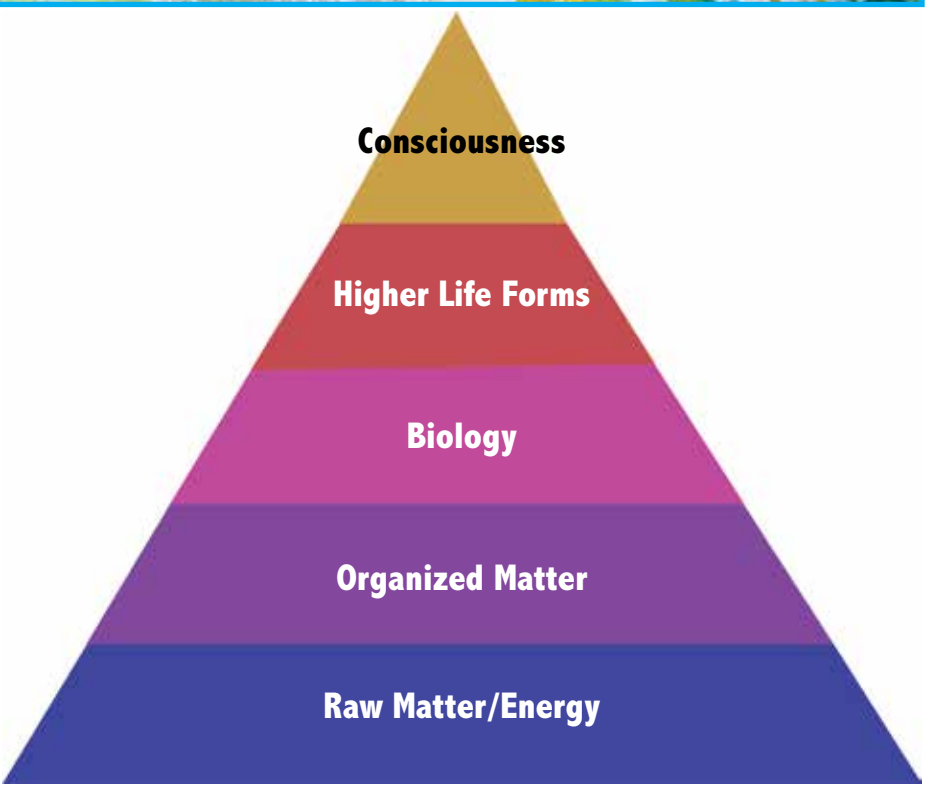
Quantum Field, the Collective Unconscious, and Intentional Creation

By G Arthur Weidman

What do the Collective Unconscious and the Quantum Field have in common? Everything. They are one and the same. And what does the Quantum Field have to do with Intentional Creation? Everything. This is where all creation takes place.

To explain how this works, it is first necessary to consider the structure of the Universe. Consider the two graphics to the right. One is essentially based on the idea that matter and energy create all living, conscious things, and the other has, at its base, consciousness, meaning that consciousness is the underlying creative force for all things manifest.

The first image is essentially the western model of how our universe is structured; but as a philosopher, I would argue that this model contains an essential flaw. Looking at the model, you can see that consciousness seems to emerge somewhere around the level of biology, and this view is widely held among many scientists. They always seem to be looking for the origin of life. My view however is that this scenario cannot happen because *that which is not conscious, cannot give rise to something that is*.



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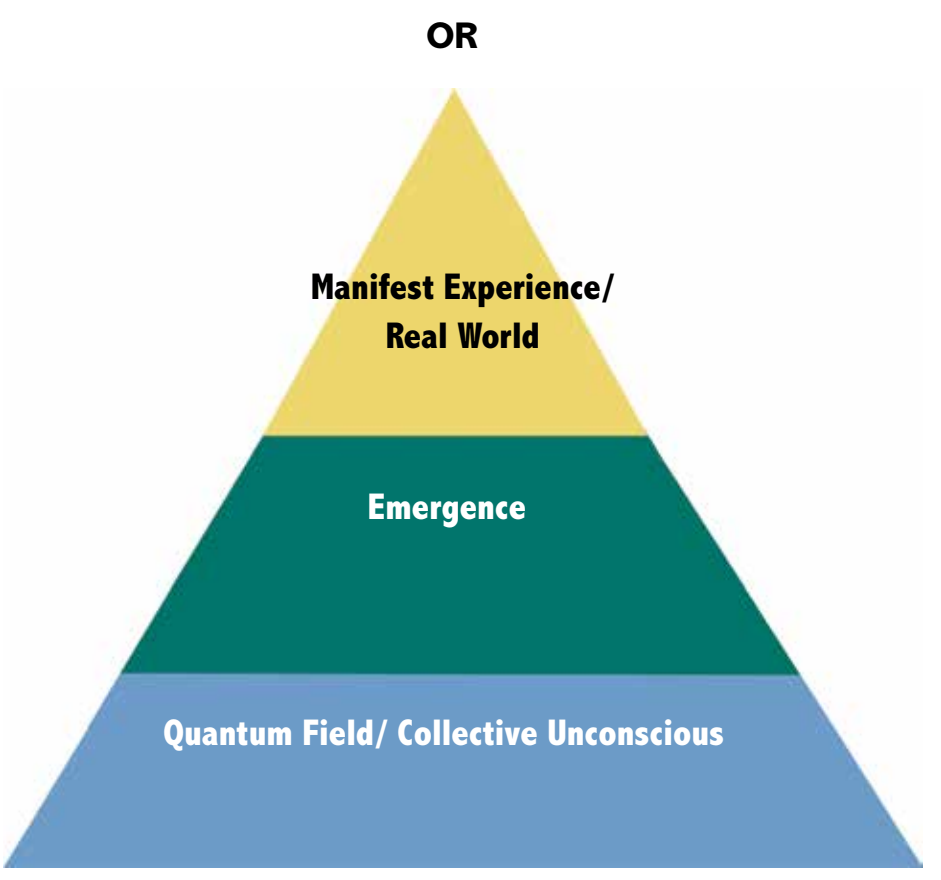

ONE IS ESSENTIALLY BASED ON THE IDEA THAT MATTER AND ENERGY CREATE ALL LIVING, CONSCIOUS THINGS, AND THE OTHER HAS, AT ITS BASE, CONSCIOUSNESS, MEANING THAT CONSCIOUSNESS IS THE UNDERLYING CREATIVE FORCE FOR ALL THINGS MANIFEST.

The second model essentially flips the first model upside down. It takes the position that consciousness (and its emotional sidekick) are essential components of the fabric of our Universe and cannot be separated. The second model also implies that all forms of the manifest world are the result of intelligent forces working behind the scenes, and that consciousness is required in order for reality to exist*, both as the creator and the experiencer*. In other words, conscious life has always existed and always will. In Hindu cosmology, one breath of Brahman is 12 billion years, and there are countless breaths.

Using the broadened perspective, we can use the phrase "quantum consciousness" when referring to what physists call the quantum field and to what psychologists call the collective unconscious. Uniting the two phrases implies that the QF is pregnant with conscious energy. Not everyone would agree with this idea. Most think the QF is inert energy without conscious aliveness; but let's assume that they are one and the same given that they share certain qualities. Both are essentially empty, filled with potential, and contain limitless energy. This emptiness is where consciousness resides as a universal presence.

Along with consciousness lives the world of emotion. They are deeply connected. In the simple phrase, "Let's go get some ice cream," you can see that there is an emotion attached to the thought. *And so, it is with everything else*. Every thought has an emotion attached, meaning that emotion resides within quantum consciousness also. Emotion is essentially empty. It has no physical mass, yet it is very real and very powerful. Consider this illustration. If one is experiencing great emotional pain, from the loss of a loved one perhaps, it might feel as though your heart is sick and the weight of the world is on your shoulders. That weight has no physical mass, but nonetheless, feels very heavy, and likewise, the pain in the heart has no physical mass but is also very powerful and very real.

ALONG WITH CONSCIOUSNESS LIVES THE WORLD OF EMOTION. THEY ARE DEEPLY CONNECTED.

How does this relate to the idea of intentional creating? Most of us think things in our experience, including the universe itself, are a result of an assemblage of materials and energy that pre-exist, and are therefore somewhat out of our control. However, I will take quite the opposite position. For anything to materialize, it must first be created as a "thought entity," and the strength of that thought entity is determined by the strength of the emotion behind it. Before anything can materialize, it first must be a potential of thought energy with its corresponding emotional energy. In other words, creativity and imagination are powered by a great desire to make something happen. This is how we create our lives—by envisioning our desires imaginatively and having emotional attachments to them. Once this potential is understood, then we begin to see that *we are creating our lives at all times, whether it be positively or negatively*, *whether we know it or not*.

Most of us, however, do not understand this. Most of us think the world happens *to* us rather than *through* us, but once we learn that the world happens *through* us by virtue of our own intentions, then we begin to arrive at a place where we realize that *we have no other choice but to be fully responsible for our lives*. No exceptions, no excuses, no blaming.

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How then, do we reconcile the fact that we are always connected with the feeling that we are not? The feeling that we are not is simply based on a set of beliefs that create the illusion of separateness. These beliefs create a sense that we are not part of the Collective Unconscious, Quantum Field, Nature, God, Tao or whatever name you would prefer, this invisible force that pervades everything, including every part of ourselves. This is why we cannot be disconnected. *It is everywhere, and it is us*.

Therefore, the feeling of being disconnected is, in and of itself, *an illusion that creates that sense of separation*. It's nothing more than the belief that we are not connected that creates this sense of separation. Yet the simple knowing that we are always connected, will enhance the feeling of being connected, resulting in a greater sense of belonging, empowerment, and overall well-being.

MOST OF US THINK THINGS IN OUR EXPERIENCE, INCLUDING THE UNIVERSE ITSELF, ARE A RESULT OF AN ASSEMBLAGE OF MATERIALS AND ENERGY THAT PRE-EXIST, AND ARE THEREFORE SOMEWHAT OUT OF OUR CONTROL. HOWEVER, I WILL TAKE QUITE THE OPPOSITE POSITION. FOR ANYTHING TO MATERIALIZE, IT MUST FIRST BE CREATED AS A "THOUGHT ENTITY," AND THE STRENGTH OF THAT THOUGHT ENTITY IS DETERMINED BY THE STRENGTH OF THE EMOTION BEHIND IT.

Often in my classes, people ask how they can connect to higher powers, and I always give the same answer. You are always connected and it's impossible to be disconnected. The question is*: How are you connected?* Are you living your life by default, feeling disconnected, lonely and powerless, or are you using quantum consciousness to your advantage? The key resides in the use of your emotional powers to create the life you desire.

Why do we want a good life? Why do we want anything at all? Why do we want good relationships, abundance, a meaningful career? It's all for the same reason: It's because we believe we will feel better in the having of them, and we can achieve all these things through intentional creating. The trick is to tap into quantum consciousness by using our emotional body learning how to feel the positive emotion that goes along with the intended manifestation. Consider this example of a woman who wants to be a mother—a woman who wants to bear and create healthy children. The trick is to create the emotions associated with this desire *before* the manifestation occurs. Learning how to feel the simple satisfaction of being a mother *in advance* will activate powers within quantum consciousness and then *conspire in your favor to manifest the real experience*. And so it is with all other desires. Quantum consciousness is an active, intelligent, compassionate, and responsive force that will work in your favor to provide everything you wish for. It's not so different than a genie in a bottle except that we are not limited to three wishes. Nor is it any different than someone who wants to become a zoologist studying animals, or an engineer designing a bridge. *The intention always precedes the manifestation*.

Is it possible to create your life in a destructive way? Yes, it is. A compassionate universe will always give you what you wish for even if it is self destructive. If you choose to die, the universe will provide you every possible means. Therefore, it is very important to be careful of what you wish for, and this means not harboring a net full of negative emotions.

YET THE SIMPLE KNOWING THAT WE ARE ALWAYS CONNECTED, WILL ENHANCE THE FEELING OF BEING CONNECTED, RESULTING IN A GREATER SENSE OF BELONGING, EMPOWERMENT, AND OVERALL WELL-BEING.

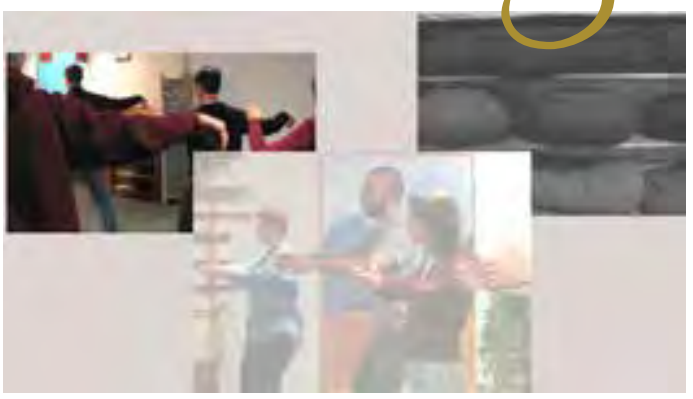
Another way to illustrate the phenomenon of intentional creation is to use the debate between reincarnation and biological reproduction. Some say one, some say the other. So, which is true? In my view, *they are both true at the same time*. I prefer to use the term "incarnation" rather than "reincarnation", because the word "incarnation implies a choice to be made, and "reincarnation" implies a duty to be fulfilled.

Assuming then, that we are eternal beings here on earth having a human experience by choice, we are then engaging quantum consciousness and its unlimited resources to give ourselves a vehicle by which we can manifest ourselves here on earth. Namely our mother and father through which we give ourselves a pathway to emerge into this physical life. Both pathways are true. Incarnation and biology are inexorably linked.

So, referring back to the two models of the Universe above. Which one is true? The answer? They are both true. It works both ways at the same time. The non-physical creates the physical, and the physical affects the nonphysical. It's a paradoxical way of looking at things, but all great truths are expressed as paradoxes.

G Arthur Weidman holds a BS in Religion/Philosophy from Western Michigan University. He resides in Kalamazoo Michigan and can be contacted by email at gweidman97@gmail.com.

Peaceful Dragon School



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